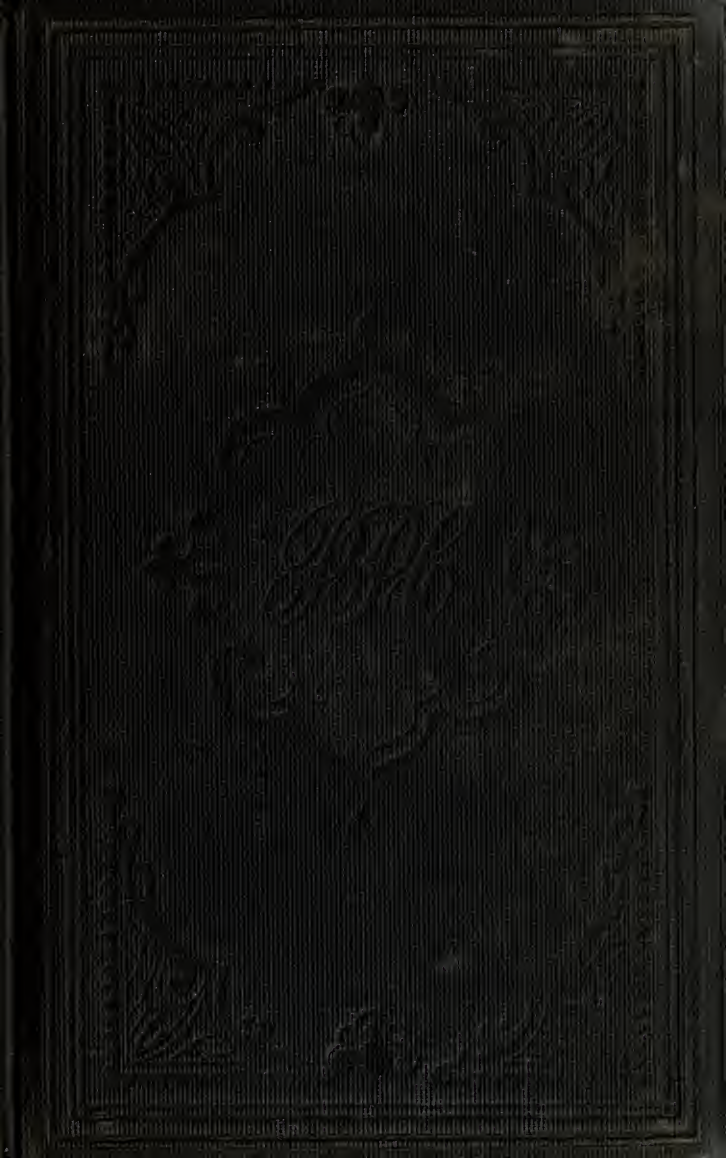

AN

INQUIRY

INTO THE

Organization and Government

OF THE

Apostolic Church,

PARTICULARLY WITH REFERENCE TO THE CLAIMS OF EPISCOPACY.

By ALBERT BARNES.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN PUBLICATION COMMITTEE,
386 CHESTNUT STREET.
NEW YORK: IVISON & PHINNEY,
321 BROADWAY.

STEREOTYPED BY L. JOHNSON & CO.
PHILADELPHIA.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THIS EDITION.

THIS volume is designed to be a *Manual* that may be put into the hands of those who are led to inquire into the organization of the Christian church. It is not intended to be controversial, or of such a character as to provoke reply; and it is hoped that it will not be construed as an *attack* on the Episcopal Church. It is submitted to the public because it is believed that there is no book on this subject that is precisely what is needed, in regard to size and character, to put into the hands of those in the churches who are interested in this inquiry. There are many persons who are interested in the inquiry who have not the time or the means to examine it very extensively. Most of the works, also, which have been written on this subject, instead of confining the investigation to the Bible, are mainly occupied with an examination

of the antiquities of the church, and the customs and sentiments of the "Fathers." The claims of Episcopacy, also, are often urged with great zeal, and pressed, sometimes in such a manner as to create embarrassment, on those who have been trained in non-episcopal churches; and there is no convenient "manual" accessible to which they can at once be referred as showing precisely how this matter stands in the New Testament.

The argument here presented is wholly *scriptural.* The characteristic of the volume is, that it is *an appeal to the Bible*, as the *only* authority in the case, and as a *sufficient* authority to settle the question. It is presumed that in a revelation given to mankind, God has made it possible to ascertain what was the original organization of the church, and that the evidence thus furnished is such that it can be understood and appreciated by the mass of mankind. It is assumed in this argument that nothing but the testimony of the Bible on the subject can be binding on the conscience, and that the whole matter must be, and may safely be, left there. It is not intended to be conceded, however, that the argument from history and from the "Fathers" would be in favour of Episcopacy, but

that point is not referred to; for, whatever may be the truth in regard to that, it can have no authority in determining what was the constitution of the church as established by the Saviour.

The foundation of the argument here presented was embodied in two reviews of the tract entitled "Episcopacy Tested by Scripture," by the Right Rev. Dr. H. U. Onderdonk, Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania. Those reviews were first published in the Quarterly Christian Spectator, of New Haven, in 1834 and 1835, and subsequently in a small volume, without material alteration. They were afterward mostly rewritten, and were cast into the form of a consecutive argument; and in this form they were again published in this country in 1843, and were soon after republished in London.

The work has again been revised for the present edition, with the design, mainly, of removing from it its controversial aspect, and making it, as its title indicates, "An Inquiry into the Organization and Government of the Apostolic Church." It has been necessary, of course, to examine with freedom the arguments in favour of Episcopacy, so far as they are derived from the Scriptures;

and for this purpose, the reference to the tract of Dr. Onderdonk is, in some places, retained. This has been done the more freely because the tract has been published by the "Protestant Episcopal Tract Society,"* and because it would be impossible to find, in the writings in defence of Episcopacy, a more full, candid, and able reference to the proof from Scripture texts relied on by Episcopalians, than is to be found in this tract of Dr. Onderdonk. An examination of the reasons there assigned for Episcopacy is, therefore, an examination of the reasons on which the Episcopal argument rests; and the tract has been referred to in the edition of this work now published, in the same manner as other Episcopal authorities.

This work has but one claim to public attention. It is that of being an examination of all that can be found in the New Testament that bears on the organization of the church. Much is gained in the inquiry into the organization and government of the church, if the investigation can be confined wholly to the Scriptures. There all who are not Episcopalians are willing to leave the

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* Printed at the Protestant Episcopal Press, 1835.

inquiry; and by that authority alone the question must be ultimately determined. It is perilous for Episcopacy to make its appeal solely to the Bible, and much is gained in the argument when there is a willingness to leave the question there.

This work, which is now again submitted to the public, contains nothing, it is believed, which can pain the feelings of any friend of Episcopacy, or which can be construed into a want of respect for the Episcopal Church. For the favourable regards of the public, few men have more occasion for gratitude than I have; and now, after so many years have passed away since the argument was first penned, whatever may be the value of my opinion, early or matured, on this subject, I desire that this work should go forth in this permanent form as expressing my conviction—the result of all my study of the Bible—in regard to the organization and government of the apostolic church.

ALBERT BARNES.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 21, 1855.

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AN INQUIRY, ETC.

CHAPTER I.

REASONS WHY THE ARGUMENT ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH SHOULD BE CONFINED TO THE SCRIPTURES.

In the discussion pursued in this volume, the argument will be confined wholly to the Scriptures, for the following reasons:

1. The whole subject of the organization and government of the church is one of mere revelation. It is connected with a revealed religion, and there can, therefore, be no *authority* in the case, except that which is derived from the declared will of God. It is claimed for the church, by all the parties in the controversy, that it is a divine institution; and the advocates of Episcopacy, with one voice, maintain that their ministry is of divine appointment. It never occurs to them to affirm that the arrangement of the clergy into "three orders" is a mere matter of expediency, or is adopted

because experience has shown that this is the best arrangement, or because other methods have failed in promoting the spirituality of the church, or even because it has unbroken tradition in its favour. It is urged that the arrangement is of divine authority, and it is adopted primarily because it is believed to be founded on the Bible. So uniform are the claims on this point, that, if this were abandoned, the whole fabric would fall, and the claim of being the *only* arrangement which God has made for the government of the church, which is now set up by the advocates of prelacy, must then be given up; for, if it were a mere matter of *expediency*, any other system founded on expediency would be equally proper and binding.

Such being the case, it is clear that the whole argument should be confined to the Scriptures. If the religion with which the ministry is connected were a matter of mere human origin or human appointment, then an appeal to the Bible as a supposed revelation would be impertinent and improper. If it were a religion of the state, then all that would be needful would be to appeal to the statutes of the land. If it were a question of expediency, then the appeal should be to what experience has shown to be the best methods of government, and to the different degrees of probable advantage which could be urged in favour of different systems. If it were to be settled by mere custom, or by antiquity—as it

may occur that the claim to title to lands is to be settled, or as it may be necessary to determine some usage or right under a civil government—then it would be proper to appeal to antiquity, and to call in the aid of the Fathers. But none of these things exist. It is not a human institution; nor is it a mere creature of the state; nor is it a thing of expediency; nor is it a simple question about antiquity:—it is a question whether *God has appointed the Episcopal orders of the ministry to govern the churches;* and this question can be settled only by an appeal to the Scriptures.

2. No authority has been given to the "Fathers" to determine this question. There is no evidence that they were authorized by the Head of the Church, either individually or by councils, to determine what should be the arrangement in the government of the church; nor is there any evidence that they were to be regarded as the infallible expounders of what the will of the Author of the Christian system was. It was not promised that *they* should have any special wisdom to arrange matters in the church; to appoint officers; to settle controversies, or to appoint orders in the ministry which should be regarded as commissioned by God. If the importance which has been attached to their views in this matter had been contemplated by the Saviour, it is remarkable that he left no intimation that their sentiments would be entitled to such deference, or

that their declarations should be authoritative in the churches. If it had been intended that councils should be regarded as having authority to settle this, then there is every reason to suppose that some intimation of this would be furnished in the discourses of the Saviour. It is needless, however, to say that no such authority from the New Testament can be adduced.

3. There is evidence in the New Testament itself, that the appeal should be confined to the Scriptures, and that Christ meant that the inquiry should be limited to them. This evidence is found in such facts as these: The account of the manner in which he organized the church looks *as if* he designed to arrange the whole subject himself, so as to leave no ground for the necessity of an appeal to coming generations of men. He set apart an order of men with great solemnity, and invested them with great authority, for the purpose of preaching the gospel and organizing the church. He taught them personally more than three years, and in such a way as to make them fully acquainted with his views and designs. He gave them full authority in the case to "bind and loose;" to establish and dissolve; with no intimation that this duty was to devolve on any of their successors. The instructions which he gave, were given to *them*, not to a fancied order of successors; to those whom he had trained under his own eye, not to those who were to be trained

under theirs. He never intimated that they would be unable to complete the arrangement, and to settle the church on a permanent basis; or that it would be necessary for them to leave any part of the arrangement to be perfected in future times. Those men, thus appointed, actually undertook the work, fully believing that they were competent to it, and acting just as if they were empowered to complete the arrangement. They went forth and preached; they founded churches; they appointed officers; they gave directions in regard to the rites and observances of worship; and they undeniably left the impression everywhere that they regarded themselves as invested with the fullest authority to organize the church. A record has been preserved, containing a full account of what was done by them in establishing churches; and to what can we so naturally look as to that, to know in what manner the Saviour designed that it should be done? There is no intimation in that record, or in any of the writings of these apostles, that they left any thing to be done by those who should succeed them. There is no hint that their successors were to complete or to perfect the plan; or that they were to give information about what the apostles had done. Any one who reads the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, cannot fail to be convinced that the writers *supposed* they were giving all the information which was needful for the guidance of man-

kind about the organization of the Christian church.

4. The "Fathers" of the church were not in circumstances so favourable to give the proper information as the apostles themselves. The "Fathers" comprise a succession of men who lived in the first centuries of the Christian era—usually supposed to include those who lived in the first four or five centuries. Subsequent to that period no one appeals to the "*Fathers*" in proof of what was the early constitution of the Christian church. Yet, *within* that time, what extraordinary advantage had they for knowing what was done by the apostles? Why should we appeal to them, rather than to the record which the apostles themselves made of what they had done? They were not inspired men; most of them lived in places remote from the fields where the apostles laboured; and not a few of them, undeniably, several generations after the apostles. Why should we go to *them* to know what order the apostles established in the church? Why should we dip up water from the Ganges or the Mississippi where they pour their floods into the ocean, after they have worn the shores and mingled with the streams flowing into them for thousands of miles, to know what the water is at the fountains? He who could stand near those fountains, and drink the water there, would never think of wandering by the course of the turbid river to examine it as it flows

along, or as it mingles with the ocean, to know what were its qualities.

5. It is impossible to settle the question by an appeal to the "Fathers." The attempt has been made in this controversy for centuries, and with no prospect of coming any nearer to a termination. To whatever cause it may be traced, it is a simple matter of history, that no witnesses of *facts* have ever been less satisfactory than the so-called Christian Fathers. No set of writers has ever lived, from whom so contradictory statements are derived; who can be appealed to with so much plausibility on both sides of a question, and whom it is so easy to set in array against each other. As this will be conceded by all who have ever read them, or who have ever looked into the controversies on the subject of the organization of the church, it is unnecessary to adduce any proof of it. This remark can be made without, in the least, impeaching the piety of the "Fathers," or undervaluing the services which they rendered to the cause of truth, or displacing them from the position which they ought to hold in the affections and grateful remembrance of mankind. Whatever may be the fact about the *actual* contradictions, or want of consistency, of any of the "Fathers," it can be traced to other causes than to a want of piety or general excellence of character. Much may be said, on each of these points, with more plausibility and probability

than would be desirable when speaking of good men, but it is not necessary to say *this* in order to see their entire unfitness to decide the Episcopal controversy. In the management of this controversy hitherto, it is impossible for any one, who has any suitable regard for the authority of the Bible, not to feel pain at the manner in which the argument has been conducted.

By common consent, almost, the writers on both sides have turned from the New Testament, where the controversy might have been brought to a speedy issue, to listen to the decisions of the "Fathers;" and as might have been expected, have

"Found no end, in wandering mazes lost."

It was the policy of the friends of prelacy to do so; and it was the folly of their opponents to suffer them to choose the field of debate, and to weary themselves in an effort to fix the meaning, to secure the consistency, and obtain the suffrages of the "Fathers." Full well was it known by the friends of Episcopacy in other times, that the New Testament could furnish only the most slender support for their claims. In the times of the papacy, it had always been defended by an appeal to the "Fathers." The system had risen there, sustained not even *professedly* by the authority of the Bible, but by the traditions of the elders. The ranks and orders of the papal priesthood could be defended only by the au-

thority of a church which claimed infallibility, and which might dispense, therefore, with the New Testament. The Reformers came forth from the bosom of the papacy with much of this feeling. They approached this subject with high reverence for the opinions of past times; with a deference for the Fathers, nourished by all the forms of their education, by all existing institutions, and by the reluctance of the human mind to break away from the established customs of ages. On the one hand, the advocates of Episcopacy found their proofs in the *common law* of the church—the institutions which had existed "time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary;" and, on the other hand, the opponents of prelacy were equally anxious to show that *they* had not departed from the customs of the Fathers, and that the defence of their institutions might be found in times far remote, and in records which received the veneration and commanded the confidence of the Christian world. Into this abyss both parties plunged. In this immense chaos of opinions and interpretations—into these moving, disorganized, jostling elements, where, as in the first chaos, light struggled with darkness, and confusion reigned, they threw themselves, to endeavour severally to find support for their opinions. "Whatsoever time, or the heedless hand of blind chance," says Milton, "hath drawn down from of old to this present, in her huge drag-net, whether fish or sea-weed, shells

or shrubs, unpicked, unchosen, those are the Fathers." With those who, according to Mosheim,* deemed it not only lawful, but commendable, to deceive and lie for the sake of truth and piety, how could *any* point be settled that involved controversy? With men who held to every strange and ridiculous opinion; to every vagary that the human mind can conceive;† it would be strange if *both* sides in this controversy did not find enough that had the appearance of demonstration, to perplex and embarrass an opponent. In examining this controversy, as it was conducted in former times, no one could help being amused or pained at the perfect complacency with which a passage from one of the Fathers is adduced in defence of either side of the question, and the perfect ease with which, by a new translation, or by introducing a few words of the context, or, more frequently, by an appeal to some other part of the same author, not studious himself of consistency, the passage is shown to mean just the contrary; and then again a new version, or yet another quotation, would give it a new aspect, and restore it to its former honours.‡ Thus, the Fathers became a mere football between

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* Murdock's Mosheim, vol. i. p. 159.

† See Tillemont's Ecclesiastical History, *passim.*

‡ See the Letters of Dr. Miller, and Dr. Bowden on Episcopacy, *passim.*

the contending parties; and thus, in this controversy, the weary searcher for truth finds no solid ground. Eminently here, "he which is *first* in his cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him." Prov. xviii. 17. To this wearisome and unsatisfactory toil he is doomed who will read all the older controversies on Episcopacy. There he,

> "O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
> With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,
> And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies."

The following very striking remark of Bishop Jeremy Taylor—himself one of the brightest ornaments of Episcopacy—expresses undoubtedly the true view in regard to the value of the Christian Fathers as instructors and guides:—"It must be acknowledged," says he, "that the writers of the ancient dispensation were such as those should be who were looking onward toward the bright day of gospel splendour; while the early Christian doctors were just such as one might expect to find in those who were looking onward toward that deep night of superstition which covered Europe during the Middle Ages. The dawn is seen to be gleaming upon the foreheads of the one class of writers, while a sullen gloom overshadows the brows of the other."*

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* Quoted in the Biblical Repository for January, 1824, p. 105.

Were we to adduce the most striking instance of the plastic nature of the proof adduced from the Fathers, we should refer to the epistles of Ignatius. They *seem* to be a plain, straight-forward account of the existence of Presbyterianism in his time. They are substantially such a description as a man would give, writing in the inflated and exaggerated manner in which the Orientals wrote, of Presbyterianism as it exists in the United States. Yet it is well known that, with the utmost pertinacity, those letters have been adduced as proving the divine origin of Episcopacy. And so confident have been the assertions on this subject, that not a few non-Episcopalians have given them up as unmanageable, and have stoutly contended, what may be very true, that no inconsiderable part of them are forgeries.

Any man can see what a hopeless task is before him if he endeavours to settle this controversy by the authority of the Fathers. The waste of time, and talent, and learning, on this subject, is fitted deeply to humble the heart. And the passion has not ceased. Even now, men high in office and in rank, leave the New Testament and appeal to the Fathers. Episcopacy is discarded, not principally because the New Testament is a stranger to it, but because Jerome was not a prelatist; it is rejected, not because it cannot be made out from the Bible, but because it is a matter of debate whether the Fathers teach it or not.

But, apart from all that might be said to impugn the authority of the Fathers on certain points, there are other circumstances which show, in the most ample manner, that such a controversy cannot be settled by an appeal to them. One is, the great *number* of the authorities to be examined, and the amount of writing with which a man must become familiar who relies on this testimony—putting it wholly out of the power of the great mass of Christians, and even of ministers of the gospel, to determine what was the organization of the church, if the appeal is to be made to them. In the works of the Fathers to which I have access, embracing those of the first five centuries of the Christian era, there are no less than *fifty-four* folio volumes, besides a considerable number of smaller size. How could the mass of Christians hope to obtain sufficient familiarity with those numerous and massive tomes, to be able to educe from them a correct view of the constitution of the primitive church? How different is such an appeal, in regard to the facility of coming to any satisfactory conclusion, from that which all men may make to the small volume of the New Testament!—A second circumstance is this: those volumes are all in languages now unspoken. There is of necessity, therefore, much difficulty in arriving with certainty at the exact meaning of the writers. There is much ambiguity; much to perplex the scholar; much which may be plausibly interpreted

in different modes, and which may, by a new translation, or by being presented in a different connection, be adduced on both sides of a question. Besides, how are the mass of Christians all over the world to have access to those volumes? Can it be presumed that they are sufficiently familiar with the Greek and Latin languages to be able to settle a controversy of this nature?—A third circumstance is this: there is much that is vague in statement; unsettled in definition; loose in narrative or declamation among those writers, as there must be always among so voluminous authors. It is undeniable, too, that they not unfrequently contradict each other and themselves.—A fourth circumstance may be adverted to: it is the remarkable difference in regard to simplicity, clearness, directness, apparent honesty, and all that gives value to written testimony, between the character of the writings of the Apostles and the Fathers. This difference I cannot better express, than in the language of one eminently qualified to express it, and who has noticed the difference with no reference to the point now under discussion. It is the testimony of Neander.* "The first authors which succeeded the apostles are the so-called Christian Fathers, who began at the apostolic times, and should have been the scholars of the apostles. In this kind of writers, a particular

* Geschichte d. Christlichen Religion und Kirche, 1. c. 1009.

thing deserving attention is, the remarkable difference between the writings of the apostles and the writings of the apostolic Fathers who lived even so near to their times. The transition from one class of writers to another, is usually gradual; here it is sudden. There is here no gradual transition, but *a spring*, [or *leap—ein Sprung*,] which is sufficient to turn the attention to the recognition of the special efficiency of the Divine Spirit in the souls of the apostles."

On this subject, also, the following remarks of Archbishop Whately will commend themselves to every candid mind; and they are of the more value as they come from one who has been honoured with the highest office in the gift of the Episcopal Church:

"For when referred to the works of the orthodox ancient Fathers, they [men] find that a very large portion of these works are lost; or that some fragments or reports of them by other writers alone remain: they find again that what *has* come down to us is so vast in amount that a life is not sufficient for the attentive study of even the chief part of it: they find these authors by no means agreed, on all points, with each other, or with themselves, and that learned men again are not agreed in the interpretation of *them;* and still less agreed as to the orthodoxy of each, and the degree of weight due to his judgment on several points; nor even agreed

by some centuries as to the degree of *antiquity* that is to make the authority of each decisive, or more or less approaching to decisive.

"Every thing in short pertaining to this appeal is obscure—uncertain—disputable—and actually disputed—to such a degree, that even those who are not able to read the original authors may yet be perfectly competent to perceive how unstable a foundation they furnish. They can perceive that the mass of Christians are called on to believe and to do what is essential to Christianity, in implicit reliance on the *reports* of their respective pastors as to what certain deep theological antiquaries have *reported* to them, respecting the *reports* given by certain ancient Fathers, of the *reports* current in their times concerning apostolical usages and institutions! And yet, whoever departs in any degree from these, is to be regarded at best in an intermediate state between Christianity and heathenism! Surely the tendency of this procedure must be to drive the doubting into confirmed (though, perhaps, secret) infidelity, and to fill with doubts the most sincerely pious, if they are anxiously desirous of attaining truth, and unhappily have sought it from such instructors."*

In settling an important question, how different is the argument derived from *such* writings, from an

* Kingdom of Christ Delineated, Essay ii. § 21.

appeal to the New Testament! *That* is one small volume; simple in its character and statements; easily perused; with no ambiguity, no pomp of rhetoric, no prejudice in favour of an existing custom; with no contradiction between one writer and another, and no inconsistency in the statements of the same writer at different times and in different circumstances. It contains not, moreover, the language of conjecture; it does not depend for its authority on human reasoning; and it is undiluted in any of its statements by the reasonings of philosophy or by tradition.

If it should be said here, that experience has shown that it is impossible to settle this controversy by an appeal to the Scriptures; that men differ as much about the meaning of the sacred writers on the constitution of the church as they do about the testimony of the Fathers; and that, though the churches have had the Bible for eighteen hundred years, the Christian world is still wholly divided in opinion on the subject,—I reply, (1.) That whatever may be the reasons why men have varied so much in their interpretation of the New Testament in the case, it is still true that it *is* easier to come to a determination of the question by an appeal to that than by an appeal to the Fathers. To the eye of common sense it is clear, that the testimony of a small volume like the New Testament, written at the time when the church was organized, and by

the men who did it, can be more easily arrived at than those of a succession of voluminous writers such as the Fathers are, extending through a period of several hundred years. I reply, (2.) That one main reason, and perhaps the *only* reason, why the sentiments of men have been divided in the case, and why the whole controversy has not been long since settled is, that they are constantly leaving the New Testament and appealing to the Fathers. The argument has never been confined, on either side, to the Bible. Each party has felt itself bound, either in self-defence or to meet its opponent, to appeal to the Fathers. The war has raged there. The triumphs or defeats have been on that field; and, in the whole range of the controversy, it is believed there is not a single volume, on either side, that makes the appeal solely and exclusively to the Bible. And if this be so, then it should not be said that *experience* has shown that it is impossible to settle this inquiry by an appeal to the Scriptures. Were the volumes of the Fathers all burned and forgotten, and were all the influence which they have exerted over this controversy removed, it would require but a brief period to determine whether Episcopacy is founded on the Bible.

6. That the appeal should be made to the Scriptures alone is now conceded by Episcopalians themselves. It was long, indeed, before the advocates for prelacy were willing to concede, in so many

words, that the controversy was to be determined by the Bible; and that it is conceded in principle is *a point gained* of inestimable importance, and will bring the controversy to a termination whenever it is honestly and fully applied. That it *is* conceded is clear from the admissions of one who, as a prelate of the Episcopal Church, has a right to express the prevalent sentiment in that church, and whose words may be regarded as having the force of authority. The sentiment, also, should be allowed to have greater weight because the tract in which it occurs has been issued by the "Protestant Episcopal Tract Society," and may be supposed, therefore, to express the present views of the whole Episcopal Church, at least in the United States. The language of Dr. Onderdonk, in the tract referred to,* is the following: "The claim of Episcopacy to be of divine institution, and, therefore, obligatory on the church, rests fundamentally on the one question: Has it the authority of Scripture? If it has not, it is not necessarily binding. This one point should be kept in view in every discussion of the subject; no argument is worth taking into the account that has not a palpable bearing on

* "Episcopacy tested by Scripture." I quote now, and shall hereafter, from the tract published at the "Protestant Episcopal Press," in connection with other articles on the subject, and called "Episcopacy Examined and Re-examined." New York, 1836.

the clear and naked topic—the scriptural evidence of Episcopacy." P. 3. The simple and honest avowal of a sentiment like this from such a quarter, should be hailed by every friend of the truth as placing the whole of this discussion on a proper basis. It is a subject of sincere congratulation that it is now conceded that we may bring to this subject the great principle of the Reformation, that *all* religious opinions are to be tested by the Scriptures. It indicates a healthy state of things in the Episcopal Church in this country. It will save endless disputes about words, and much useless toil in endeavouring to give consistency and sense to the Fathers. This mode of reasoning, too, will soon decide the controversy. Hereafter, let it be held up as a great principle from which, neither in spirit nor in form, we are ever to depart, that if the peculiar doctrines of Episcopacy are not found in the Scriptures, they are to be abandoned, or held, as Cranmer held them, as matters of mere expediency. Let this truth go forth, never to be recalled; and let every man who attempts to defend the claims of prelates appeal to the Bible alone. On this appeal, with confidence, we rest the issue of this case.

For reasons such as have now been stated, it is proposed to conduct the following investigation solely with reference to the testimony of the Scriptures. By the results of such an investigation the Protestant community *must* ultimately abide

CHAPTER II.

THE CLAIMS WHICH ARE ADVANCED BY EPISCOPACY.

EPISCOPACY is a religion of claims. It advances certain pretensions relating to important points in the government and organization of the church, which, if well founded, are binding on all churches, and which, in their tendency, go to unsettle the claims of all others. It is not an argument, on the part of the Episcopalian, drawn from expediency, or human prudence, or a conventional arrangement among men; nor is it an argument which *can* admit other churches to be on the same basis with themselves, or other ministers to be the commissioned servants of God. If Episcopacy be of divine origin; if it be the form prescribed in the New Testament for the organization of the church; if it was instituted by the Redeemer and the apostles,—then, whatever other consequences may flow from it, or however inconsistent the advocates of Episcopacy may be in carrying out these principles, the regular result of the claim is, that the Episcopal Church is the only true church, and that all other churches

are of human origin. This consequence follows inevitably. These remarks are not made with a view of exciting *prejudice* in any minds against the system, but merely to show the nature of the claims which are thus advanced. It is well known that these consequences are not allowed by many Episcopalians; and there is much gained on the score of charity in the fact that the advocates of a system are not always consistent with their own principles. Yet any one can see that the claims of any system to be exclusively scriptural or of divine authority in its origin leads, in fact, as a necessary consequence, to the conclusion that all others are mere human and unauthorized arrangements.

In pursuance of this thought, I remark, then, that the burden of proof lies wholly on the friends of Episcopacy. They set up a claim—a claim which they affirm to be binding on all the churches of every age. It is a claim which is specific, and which must be made out, or their whole pretensions fall. In what predicament it may leave other churches, is not the question. It would not prove Episcopacy to be of divine origin, could its friends show that Presbyterianism is unfounded in the Scriptures; or that Congregationalism has no claims to support; or that Independency is unauthorized; or that lay ordination is destitute of direct support. The question, after all, might be, whether it was

the design of the apostles to establish *any* particular form of church government any more than to establish a fixed code of civil administration? The specific point to be made out by Episcopalians is, *That there is scriptural authority for that which is claimed for bishops.* This is not a claim which can be defended by any doubtful passages of Scripture, or by any circuitous mode of argumentation. As it is expected to affect the whole constitution of the church; to constitute, in fact, the peculiarity of its organization; and to determine, to a great extent at least, the validity of all its ordinances and its ministry, we have a right to demand that the proof should not be of a doubtful character, or of a nature which is not easily apprehended by the ordinary readers of the New Testament.

It is a point of essential importance in this controversy, *that the burden of proof lies on the friends of Episcopacy.* It is theirs to make out this specific claim. To decide whether they can do so, is the object of the present inquiry.

The claims of Episcopacy, as a peculiar institution, are stated by Bishop Onderdonk, in the tract above referred to, in the following words: "Episcopacy declares that the Christian ministry was established *in three orders,* called, ever since the apostolic age, Bishops, Presbyters, or Elders and Deacons; of which the highest only has the right

to ordain and confirm, that of general supervision in a diocese, and that of the chief administration of discipline, besides enjoying all the powers of the other grades. The main question being thus concerning the superiority of bishops, and the rights of the next order being restricted only so much as not to be inconsistent with those of the highest, we need not extend our investigation of Scripture beyond what is requisite for this grand point. If we cannot authenticate the claims of the episcopal office, we will surrender those of our deacons, and let all power be confined to the one office of presbyters." P. 11. The same view of the main point of the controversy is given by Hooker, in his Ecclesiastical Polity, b. vii. It will be seen, therefore, that the main point of the discussion, in the estimation of Episcopalians, relates to *bishops* or prelates, and that the claim set up for them extends to several points. One is, the right of ordination; a second, that of confirmation; a third, that of general supervision; a fourth, that of the general administration of discipline. As all that is peculiar to Episcopacy is involved in these claims, it is proposed to examine them in order, to ascertain whether these important matters in the organization of the church are intrusted in the New Testament to prelates. If the claim in regard to each of them cannot be made out *from the New Testament*, it is worthless; for "no argu

ment is worth taking into account that has not a palpable bearing on the clear and naked topic —the scriptural evidence of Episcopacy." These points must be made out separately by Episcopalians, to wit:—that "bishops" have the sole right of ordination; that the rite called "confirmation" is directed in the Scriptures to be administered by them; that they have a general supervision of the churches within a certain district; and that the general administration of discipline is intrusted to them. If these are not made out, it will follow, by the admission above, and by the nature of the case, that presbyters have the right of ordination; that the ministers of the gospel are equal in authority and rank; and that the church, as organized by the Saviour and his apostles, was *not* episcopal in its form. We enter now, therefore, upon a particular examination of each of these topics.

CHAPTER III.

EXAMINATION OF THE PARTICULAR CLAIMS OF EPISCOPACY.

SECT. 1.—*The Exclusive Claims of the "Bishop" to the Right of Ordination.*

THE claim in regard to the superiority of the "order of bishops" to that of presbyters or elders, rests on two points:—one is, that the peculiarity of the apostolic office consisted in the right of ordination; and the other, that, supposing this were so, "there was *continued*, as had been begun in the apostles, an order of ministers superior to the elders." Tract, p. 16. If either of these points cannot be made out, the claim is invalid. For, if it were demonstrated that there was intrusted to the apostles the right of ordination as the peculiarity of their office, it would by no means follow that that right was to be continued in the church. It *might* be a temporary arrangement, a thing valuable in the organization of the church, but whose necessity would expire when the church was fairly established. Even on the supposition, therefore, that the right had ever existed, it would be necessary

to show from the New Testament—for no testimony of the Fathers will do here—that the Lord Jesus *meant* that such a peculiarity of the apostolic office should be continued. But if it shall appear that the right of ordination *never was* a peculiarity of the apostolic office, but that the apostles were called for a specific purpose of a different kind—a purpose which ceased, of course, when they died—then it will follow that all the claims of "bishops" as their "successors," are void. It is proposed, therefore, to examine the New Testament with particular reference to each of these inquiries:—first, whether the right of ordination is represented as the peculiarity of the apostolic office; and, secondly, whether there is any proof in the New Testament that it was designed that they should have any "successors" in their office.

The question then is, Has a bishop the sole power of ordaining? Is the right of setting apart to the office of preaching, and administering the sacraments, confined in the New Testament exclusively to this order of ministers? The Episcopalian claims that it is. We deny it, and ask him for the explicit proof of a point so simple as this, and one which we have a right to expect he will make out, with very great clearness, from the sacred Scriptures.

The first proof of this point adduced by Episcopalians is, that the apostles had the sole power of

ordaining. This is a highly important point in the discussion, or, rather, the very hinge of the controversy. The argument as stated in the tract of Dr. Onderdonk, (pp. 14–16,) rests on the assumption that the apostles *ordained.* "That the apostles ordained, all agree." Now, if this means any thing to the purpose, it means that they ordained *as apostles,* or that they were set apart to the apostolic office for the *purpose* of ordaining. Having made this assumption, the writer adds, that a *distinction* is observed in the New Testament between "the apostles *and* elders," "the apostles *and* elders *and* brethren." He next attempts to show that this distinction was not made because they "were appointed by Christ personally;" nor because "they had seen our Lord after his resurrection;" nor "because of this power of working miracles;"—and then adds: "It follows, therefore, or will not at least be questioned, that the apostles were distinguished from the elders because they were *superior* to them in ministerial power and rights." This is the argument; and this is the whole of it. On the making out of this point depends the stupendous fabric of Episcopacy. Here is the cornerstone on which rests the claims of prelates; this the position on which the stupendous and mighty superstructure has been reared.

Now, the only way of ascertaining whether this claim be well-founded, is to appeal at once to the

New Testament. The question, then, is, Whether the apostles were chosen for the *distinctive* and *peculiar* work of ordaining to sacred offices? This the Episcopalian affirms. This we take the liberty of calling in question.

The evangelists have given three separate and full accounts of the appointment of the apostles. One is recorded by Matthew, ch. x.; another by Mark, ch. iii.; the third by Luke, ch. vi. They were selected from the other disciples, and set apart to their work with great solemnity. The act was performed in the presence of a great multitude, and after the Saviour had passed the night in prayer to God. Luke vi. 12. The directions given to them on the occasion occupy, in one part of the record, (Matt.) the entire chapter of forty-two verses. Those directions are given with very great particularity, embracing a great variety of topics, evidently intended to guide them in all their ministry, and to furnish them with ample instruction as to the nature of their office. They refer to times which would follow the death of the Lord Jesus, and were designed to embrace the whole period of their peculiar work.

Now, on the supposition of Episcopalians, that the peculiarity of their work was to *ordain*, or that "they were distinguished from the elders because they were *superior* to them in ministerial powers and rights," it cannot but be regarded as

unaccountable that we find not one word of this here. There is not the slightest allusion to any such distinguishing "powers and rights." There is nothing which can be *tortured* into any such claim. This is the more remarkable, as, on another occasion, he sent forth seventy disciples at one time, (Luke x. 1–16,) usually regarded by Episcopalians as the foundation of the *second* order of their ministers; and there is not the slightest intimation given that *they* were to be inferior to the apostles in the power of ordaining, or in superintending the churches. What explanation will the Episcopalian give of this remarkable omission in the instructions of the primitive "bishops?"

This omission is not the less remarkable in the instructions which the Lord Jesus gave to these same apostles after his resurrection from the dead. At *that* time we should assuredly have expected an intimation of the existence of some such peculiar power. But not the slightest hint occurs of any such exclusive authority and superintendence. Matthew, (xxviii. 18–20,) Mark, (xvi. 15–18,) and Luke, (xxiv. 47–49,) have each recorded these parting instructions. They tell us that he directed them to remain in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high, and then to go forth and preach the gospel to every creature; but not a solitary syllable occurs about any exclusive power of ordination; about their being a peculiar

order of ministers; about their transmitting the peculiarity of the apostolic office to others. What is the explanation of this fact? How is it to be accounted for, if the peculiarity of their office consisted in "superiority of ministerial powers and rights," that neither at their election and ordination, nor in the departing charge of the Saviour, nor in any intermediate time, do we ever hear of it —that even the advocates for the powers of the "bishop" never *pretend* to adduce a solitary expression that can be construed into a reference to any such distinction?

I proceed now to observe that there is *not anywhere else, in the New Testament*, a statement that this was the peculiarity of the apostolic office. Of this any man may be satisfied who will examine the New Testament. Or he may find the proof in a less laborious way by simply looking at the fact that none of the advocates of Episcopacy pretend to adduce any such declaration. The apostles often speak of themselves; the historian of their doings (Luke*) often mentions them; but the place remains yet to be designated, after this controversy has been carried on by keen-sighted disputants for several hundred years, which speaks of any such peculiarity of their office.

This point, then, I shall consider as settled, and

* In the Acts of the Apostles.

shall feel at liberty to make all the use of it to which it can be fairly applied in the argument. I might here insist on the strong presumption thus furnished, that this settles the inquiry. We should be very apt to regard it as decisive in any other case. If two men go from a government to a foreign court, and one of them claims to be a plenipotentiary, and affirms that the other is a mere private secretary, or a consul, we expect that the claimant will sustain his pretensions by an appeal to his commission or instructions. If he maintains that this is the peculiarity of his office, we expect to find this clearly stated in the documents which he brings. If he is mentioned by no *name* that designates his office—as the Episcopalian admits the "bishop" is not; if his commission contains no such appointment; and if we should learn that specific instructions were given to him at his appointment, and again repeated in a solemn manner when he left his native shores,—we should look with strong suspicions on these remarkable claims. Would not any foreign court decide at once that such pretensions, under such circumstances, were utterly unfounded?

Let us, then, proceed to inquire whether it is possible to ascertain the peculiarity of the apostolic office; for it must be conceded that there was *something* to distinguish the apostles from the other ministers of the New Testament. Here, happily,

we are not left in the dark. The sacred writers themselves have given an account which cannot be easily mistaken, and it is a matter of amazement that it ever has been mistaken. The first account which I adduce is from the lips of the Saviour himself. In those solemn moments when he was about to leave the world, when the work of atonement was finished, and when he gave the apostles their final commission, he indicated the nature of their labours and the peculiarity of their office in these words:—"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day:—*And ye are* WITNESSES *of these things.*" Luke xxiv. 46–48. The object of their peculiar appointment, which he here specifies, was, that they should be WITNESSES to all nations. (Comp. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.) The "things" of which they were to bear witness he mentions distinctly. They were *his sufferings in accordance with the predictions of the prophets:* "thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer;" *and his resurrection from the dead:* "and to rise from the dead the third day." These were the points to bear "witness" to which they had been selected; and these were the points on which they, in fact, insisted in their ministry.

I would next remark that this is expressly declared to be the "peculiarity" of the apostolic office. It was done so at the election of an apostle

to fill up the vacated place of Judas. Here, if the peculiar design had been to confer "superiority in ministerial rights and powers," we should expect to be favoured with some account of it. It was the very time when it was natural and proper to give a statement of the reason why they filled up the vacancy in the college of apostles, and when they actually did make such a statement. Their words are these:—"Wherefore, of those men which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day when he was taken up from us, *must one be ordained to be a* WITNESS WITH US *of his resurrection.*" Acts i. 21, 22. This passage I consider to be absolutely decisive on the point before us. It shows, first, for what purpose they ordained the newly-elected apostle; and, second, that *they* were ordained for the same purpose. Why do we hear nothing on this occasion of their "superiority of ministerial rights and powers?" Why nothing of their peculiar prerogative to ordain? Why nothing of their "general superintendence" of the church? Plainly because they had conceived of nothing of this kind as entering into their original commission and the peculiar design of their office. For this purpose of bearing *testimony* to the world of the resurrection of the Messiah, they had been originally selected. For this they had been prepared by a long and

intimate acquaintance with the Saviour. They had seen him; had been with him in various scenes fitted to instruct them more fully in his designs and character; had enjoyed an intimate personal friendship with him, (1 John i. 1,) and they were thus qualified to go forth as "witnesses" of what they had seen and heard; to confirm the great doctrine that the Messiah had come, had died, and had risen, according to the predictions of the prophets. —I add, here, that these truths were of sufficient importance to demand the appointment of twelve honest men to give them confirmation. There was consummate wisdom in the appointment of witnesses enough to satisfy any reasonable mind, and yet not so many as to give it the appearance of tumult or popular excitement. The truth of the whole scheme of Christianity rested on making out the fact that the Lord Jesus had risen from the dead, (comp. 1 Cor. xv.;) and the importance of that religion to the welfare of mankind demanded that this should be substantiated to the conviction of the world. Hence the anxiety of the eleven to complete the number of the original witnesses selected by the Saviour; and hence their care that the person chosen should have the same acquaintance with the facts which they had themselves.

It is worthy also of remark, that, in the account which the historian gives of their labours, this is the main idea which is presented. Acts ii. 32: "This

Jesus hath God raised up, whereof *we are witnesses.*" V. 32: "And we are *witnesses* of these things." X. 39–42: "And we are *witnesses* of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they slew and hanged on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; *not to all the people, but unto* WITNESSES *chosen before of God, even unto us,* who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to TESTIFY—*διαμαρτύρασθαι* —that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead." In this place, also, we meet with another explicit declaration that this was the object of their original appointment. They were "chosen" for this, and set apart in the holy presence of God to this work. Why do we not hear any thing of "their superiority in ministerial rights and powers?" Why no intimation of the power of "confirming," and of "general superintendence?" I repeat, that it is not possible to answer these questions except on the supposition that they did not regard any such powers as at all entering into the peculiarity of their commission.

Having disposed of all that is said in the New Testament of the original design of the appointment to the apostolic office, I proceed to another and somewhat independent source of evidence. The original number of the apostles was twelve. The

design of their selection we have seen. For important purposes, however, it pleased God to add to their number one who had *not* been a personal attendant on the ministry of the Saviour, and who was called to the apostleship four years after his crucifixion and resurrection. Now, this is a case, evidently, which must throw very important light on our inquiries. It is independent of the others. As he was not a personal observer of the life and death of Jesus, as he was not an original "witness" in the case, we may expect in the record of his appointment a full account of his "superiority in ministerial rights and powers." If such superiority entered into the peculiarity of the apostolic office, this was the very case where we should expect to find it. His conversion was subsequent to the resurrection. He was to be employed extensively in founding and organizing churches. He was to have committed to his apostolic care almost the entire pagan world. (Comp. Rom. xi. 13; xv. 16; Gal. ii. 7.) His very business was one that seemed to call for some specific account of "superiority in ministerial rights," if any such rights were involved in the apostolic office. How natural to expect a statement of such rights, and of an account of the "general superintendence" intrusted to him as an apostle! Let us look, therefore, and see how the case stands. We have three distinct accounts of the appointment of the apostle Paul to the

apostleship, in each of which the *design* of his appointment is stated. In his discourse before the Jews, (Acts xxii. 14, 15,) he states the charge given to him by Ananias at Damascus: "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his WITNESS *unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.*" Again, in his speech before Agrippa, (Acts xxvi. 16,) Paul repeats the words addressed to him by the Lord Jesus in his original commission: "I have appeared unto thee *for this purpose*, to make thee a minister—ὑπηρέτην—and a WITNESS, both of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." Again, in the account which is given of his past and future work, (Acts xxiii. 11,) it is said: "As thou hast *testified* of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear *witness* also at Rome."

This is the account which is given of the call of Saul of Tarsus to the apostolic office. But where is there a single syllable of any "superiority in ministerial powers and rights," as constituting the peculiarity of his office? We may respectfully ask all the advocates of Episcopacy to point to us a shadow of any such episcopal investment. We think their argument demands it. And if there *is* no such account, either in the original choice of the twelve, or in the appointment of Matthias, or in

the selection of the "apostle to the Gentiles," it is right to insist with firmness on a satisfactory explanation of the causes which operated to produce the omission of the very *gist* of their office, according to Episcopacy. *Some* reasons should be suggested, prudential or otherwise, which made it proper to pass over the very vitality of the original commission.

But we have not done with the apostle Paul. He is too important a "witness" for us, as well as for the purpose for which he was appointed, to be dismissed without further attention. It has been remarked already that he was not a personal follower of Jesus of Nazareth, and was not present at his death and ascension. It may be asked, then, how could he be a "witness" in the sense and for the purposes already described? Let us see how this was provided for. I transcribe the account from his own statement of the address made to him by Ananias. Acts xxii. 14: "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, *and* SEE *that Just One, and shouldst hear the words of his mouth.*" That he *had* thus seen him, it is not necessary to prove. See 1 Cor. xv. 8; Acts ix. 5, 17. The inference which I here draw is, that he was permitted to *see* the Lord Jesus in an extraordinary manner, for the express purpose of qualifying him to be invested with the *peculiarity of the apostleship.* This inference, sufficiently clear

from the very statement, I shall now proceed to put beyond the possibility of doubt.

Let us turn, then, to another account which Paul has given of his call to the apostleship, 1 Cor. ix. 1, 2: "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? *Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?*" I adduce this passage as proof that *to have seen Jesus Christ* was considered as an indispensable qualification for the apostleship. So Paul regarded it in his own case. It is adduced also for another purpose, viz. to strengthen my main position, that the apostles were designated to their office specifically as *witnesses* to the character and resurrection of Christ. If this was *not* the design, why does Paul appeal to the fact that he had *seen* the Saviour, as proof that he was qualified to be an apostle? And we may further ask, with emphasis, If the apostles, as Episcopalians pretend, did, in virtue of their office, possess "superiority in ministerial powers and rights," why did not Paul once *hint* at the fact in this passage? His express object was to vindicate his claim to the apostleship. In doing this he appeals to that which I am endeavouring to show constituted the peculiarity of the office—his being "*witness*" to the Saviour. In this instance we have a circumstance of which Paley would make much in an argument if it fell in with the design of the "Horæ Paulinæ." We claim the privilege of making as much of it upon the question whether the peculiarity of the

apostolic office was "*superiority* of ministerial powers and rights."

I have now examined all the passages of Scripture which state the design of the apostleship. It has been shown, if I mistake not, that the ground of the distinction between the "apostles *and* elders," "the apostles *and* elders *and* brethren," was not that the former had superiority of "ministerial powers and rights." We might leave the argument here; for, if Episcopalians cannot make out *this* point to entire satisfaction, all that is said about *successors* in the apostolic office, and about perpetuating the apostleship, must be nugatory and vain. But there is an independent topic of remark here, and one which bears on the subject, therefore, with all the force of a cumulative argument. This is stated in the following words: that "there was *continued*, as had begun in the apostles, an order of ministers *superior* to the elders." Tract, p. 16. This the author of the tract representing the arguments of Episcopalians on the subject attempts to prove, on the ground that "there is no scriptural evidence that mere elders (presbyters) ordained," (pp. 16–23,) and that "the above distinction between elders and a grade superior to them in regard especially to the power of ordaining, was so persevered in as to indicate that it was a *permanent* arrangement, and not designed to be but temporary." Pp. 23, 24.

In the inquiry, then, whether this distinction was continued or persevered in, we might insist on what has been already shown as decisive. If the original distinction was what it has been shown to be, that the design of selecting and appointing the apostles to their office was that they might be "*witnesses*" of the life, the teachings, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of the Saviour, then it could *not* be persevered in without (as in the case of Paul) a personal, direct manifestation of the ascended Saviour, to qualify every future incumbent in the apostleship. 1 Cor. ix. 1. No modern "bishop," it is presumed, will lay claim to this. The very supposition that any such revelation was necessary would dethrone every prelate and prostrate every mitre in Christendom.

But we have, as before remarked, an independent train of arguments on this point. It is evident that the whole burden of proof here lies on the Episcopalian. He maintains that such an original distinction existed, and that it was perpetuated. Both these positions we deny. The first has been shown to be unfounded, and has thus virtually destroyed the other. Let us proceed, however, to the comparatively needless task of showing that the position, that there was an arrangement by which an order of men "*superior* to the elders" was continued in the church, is equally unfounded.

The argument in support of the position, that

there was to be an order of men of substantially the same rank as the apostles, and superior to another grade of ministers in the church, can be made out only by substantiating one or both of the following positions: either (1) that it is expressly stated in the New Testament that the "order" was continued, or was to be continued; or (2) by an induction of particulars, showing that though there was no formal *statement* on this point, yet that the order was, *in fact*, continued. Either of them, I admit, would settle the question in favour of Episcopacy; if both fail, then it is equally clear that the claim is unfounded. It is proposed to examine both these points by the New Testament.

First, then, there is no *express statement* in the New Testament that such a "superior order" of ministers was to be "continued" in the church, or that the apostles were to have "successors" in the peculiarity of their office. This point is so clear that even Episcopalians do not pretend to affirm it. There is nothing to which they refer as conveying this idea. Neither in the instructions of the Saviour himself when he called them to their office, nor in any declaration which fell from his lips during his ministry, nor in any thing that the apostles themselves said, either before or subsequent to the resurrection of the Saviour, is it declared that the peculiarity of the apostolic office was to be continued by a "succession" of men extending into future

times. This assertion is made with entire confidence, and it is not and cannot be denied by the advocates of Episcopacy. The only declaration in the New Testament that has any resemblance to such a position, or that is ever even remotely referred to by Episcopalians on this point, is the promise of the Saviour in Matt. xxviii. 20: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." But, assuredly, this passage will not demonstrate that the peculiarity of the apostolic office was to be perpetuated, or that the apostles were to have successors in their office, or that there was to be an order of men continued in the church superior in rank and power to a certain other order of men. It does not prove this for the following reasons: (1.) There is no declaration in this promise, express or implied, that the *peculiarity* of their office was to be continued. *That*, certainly, is not the point of the promise, whatever may be its real import. The point of the promise is, the presence of the Saviour to the end of time with those who were to go and preach the gospel. (2.) There is no allusion to any such fact as that they were to be "superior" to another order of men, or that an order of men superior to others was to be continued in the church. No mention is made of any such "orders" of men; there is no intimation that there would be. (3.) The promise is one that is adapted to all authorized preachers of the gospel, whatever

rank or order they may sustain. According to the Saviour's commission, the promise extends to all those who should be called by him and commissioned to go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. xxviii. 19. It was to such persons (ver. 20) that the promise of his presence was made by the Saviour; and wherever any persons have evidence that they are authorized by him to engage in that work, they have a right to apply this promise to themselves. But is this work to be confined to prelates, the pretended "successors" of the apostles? Are no others authorized to go and disciple the nations; to baptize in the name of the Trinity, and to teach men to observe the commandments of God? Assuredly, this will not be pretended, for no Episcopalian ever supposed that "bishops" *only* were authorized to become missionaries to the heathen.

But, if this text will not support the pretensions to a "succession" in the peculiarity of the apostolic office, which it neither expresses nor implies, then there *is* no express declaration in the New Testament that an order of men was to be "continued" in the ministry "superior" to another order. And if this be so, we have here one of the most remarkable facts that has ever occurred in the institution of any office whatever; a fact so remarkable as to render it incredible that it should ever have occurred.

A brief glance at the circumstances of the case will illustrate this. They are these:

According to the belief of Episcopalians, this "order" of the ministry—to wit, that of "bishops" as the successors of the apostles,—was to continue forever. It was intended by the Saviour that at no time should the church be without an order of men who should be properly the "successors of the apostles."

According to their belief, that arrangement was to take place in all lands where the gospel was preached. No matter what might be the form of civil government there prevailing—whether a republic, a democracy, an aristocracy, or a monarchy—there was to be but one form in which *the church* was to be organized; and in every land there was to be an order in the ministry who should be properly the "successors of the apostles."

According to their belief, the correct organization of the whole church was dependent on the observance of the distinction between this "superior grade" and an inferior grade in the ministry; and there could be, in fact, no properly organized church unless there was an order of men who should be properly "the successors of the apostles."

According to their belief, the validity of all ordinations everywhere depended on this, and no one could be authorized to preach the gospel unless

there had been laid on him the hands of those who were properly the "successors of the apostles."

According to their belief, the validity of all sacraments depended on this, and no one could properly administer the rite of baptism or the Lord's supper unless he had derived his authority from those who were properly "the successors of the apostles."

According to their belief, the proper government of the church everywhere depended on this, and none would have a right to administer discipline except those who were properly the "successors of the apostles."

According to their belief, if these things are not so, and if there is no such "succession" of men in the church, the churches are unauthorized assemblies, without a valid ministry; with no sacraments properly administered; with none empowered by the great Head of the church to proclaim salvation, to offer pardon, to minister consolation, or to bury the dead.

With these consequences full in view, we turn, then, to the original commission of these men whose "successors" were to be intrusted with so much power, and the continuation of whose office was to involve the destiny of countless millions of mankind. We go and listen to the Saviour when he called them on the banks of Gennesareth. We examine all the instructions that he gave them in three years of his most faithful ministry. We listen to his voice

when he was about to ascend to heaven, and when he gave them his parting counsel and issued his great commission. Strange to tell, in all this, not one word do we hear of any such tremendous results depending on the fact that there were to be those who should be "successors" in the peculiarities of their office, nor is there even a hint that they were to *have* any such successors.

We turn then to another fact—a fact which must have been before the eyes of the Redeemer. It is the arrangement made in regard to the priestly office in the Old Testament. There every thing was ordered in the most exact manner. There is no ambiguity. There is no reason for doubting that Moses intended that the ministry which *he* instituted should be arranged in three orders, or that it was designed that there should be a "successor" to the one of "superior order"—the high-priest. Every thing relating to that officer, and to the "succession," is specified with the utmost particularity, and the arrangement entered into the essential structure of the constitution of the Jewish commonwealth. Can any one believe that the Saviour intended that there should be similar distinctions in his church, essential to its very existence, and yet that there should not be a single word in regard to it in his own statements of the nature of the ministry? They may explain this who can; but if such results were to be dependent

on the fact that an order of men was to be continued in the church, who should be the "successors" of the apostles in the peculiarity of their office, and yet not one word of this ever occurred in the account of its organization, then the church of the Lord Jesus is the most singularly organized body that ever pretended to have a constitution.

Leaving this matter to be explained by Episcopalians as it may be—a work which remains yet to be attempted—*the fact* is all that is of essential importance to us now. That fact is, that there is no intimation in the instructions or counsels of the Saviour that he ever designed that the peculiarity of the apostolic office should be transmitted to a body of men who should be their "successors."

The second point of the inquiry, then, is, Whether the recorded facts in the doings of the apostles themselves are such as to show that this was intended? It is certainly undeniable that it *might* be so. Though there were not in the original commission of the apostles themselves, or in any declaration of the Saviour, an express statement that this order of men was to be continued in a regular "succession," yet it must be admitted that such might have been the organization of the church under them, and such their uniform practice, as to show that this regular succession was contemplated, and is still indispensable to the existence of the church. It is conceivable that in every case where a vacancy

occurred in the apostolic college, they should forthwith ordain a "successor;" or that they should, in some sufficiently intelligible and formal way, appoint men *over* others, with the powers and functions of their own office; or that, having ordained certain men to the ministry, they should uniformly address them as apostles, and as invested with the functions of the apostolic office; or that, in every country where churches were organized in sufficient number, they should constitute some one with the right of confirmation, and with the general charge of governing the churches, and with instructions to transmit his peculiar authority to some "successor" of the same rank. In either of these cases it is admitted that there would be a sufficient indication that the church was to be constituted and governed in this manner—however we might explain the want of any such statement in the original commission. The defect in the original commission would be practically supplied, and the authority for the superior "apostolic" order in the church could not, with propriety, be called in question. The advocates for Episcopacy, conceding the want of the express statement in the original commission on this point, suppose that they find evidence of such an arrangement in the subsequent organization of the church; or such evidence that the apostles intended that their own "order" or rank in the ministry should be continued as to amount to a proof that this was

the intention of the Saviour. That evidence is found, they think, not in any express declaration of the apostles themselves, but in such supposed *acts* as to show that there was the same authority transmitted which *they* had, as apostles, and that this was to be a permanent arrangement. The evidence consists in the alleged fact that certain individuals are mentioned with such appellations, and designated to perform such offices, as to show that they belonged to an order of the clergy "superior" to the presbyters, and were in the same rank as the apostles. To examine this claim, therefore, is essential to a correct understanding of the subject, and this examination will settle the question. This must be done by an investigation of the cases of the particular individuals who are claimed to be the successors of the apostles. It is proposed to take up these cases in the order in which they are usually presented by Episcopalians, and to inquire, *What is the evidence that they succeeded the apostles in the peculiarity of the apostolic office, so as to show that it was intended that this should be a permanent arrangement in the church?*

The first case is that of Matthias, Acts i. 15–26. The argument which is relied on in his case is, that one of the first acts of the apostles, after they received the apostolic office, was to "transfer the very same power which they had received from Christ;" (Bishop McCoskry;) and that Matthias was so se-

lected, and such power conferred on him, as to prove that he was to be ranked among the apostles, and to indicate that this was to be a permanent arrangement. It is supposed to be the first step in the doings of the apostles, indicating that their order was to be continued in the churches, and that it was not to be allowed to become extinct by the death of those sustaining the office.

Now, in regard to the case of Matthias, the following remarks will show the bearing of this example on the argument:

1. He was undoubtedly chosen to be *an apostle* in the proper sense of the word. This is implied in the whole transaction, and is, indeed, expressly affirmed. Peter states, in his argument for going into the election, that one of their number had committed suicide, and that it was proper that his place should be supplied by an election. The propriety of this he argues by a quotation from Psalm lxix. 25: "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no mand well therein; and his bishopric let another take;" that is, let his *office*, or *charge*—ἐπισκοπὴν—be conferred on another. The word is applied to *any* oversight or care of a thing, and in the New Testament refers to having the care or oversight of the church, without reference to any particular *rank* in doing it. See Acts xx. 28, and Phil. i. 1, where it is applied to presbyters. On the ground of this ancient prediction, Peter argued that it was

necessary and proper to elect one with suitable qualifications to fill the office with which Judas had been invested, or to accomplish what he was chosen to accomplish as an apostle. That it was understood that he was to be an apostle, with the rank, title, and prerogatives of an apostle, is clear. He was to be in the office what Judas would have been, if he had not, by transgression, fallen. Accordingly, it is expressly stated that "he was numbered with the eleven apostles," (Acts i. 26,) and the apostles are twice referred to afterwards, in their collective capacity, in such a manner as to lead to the supposition that Matthias was with them. Thus it is said, (Acts ii. 14,) "But Peter standing up with *the eleven*, lifted up his voice;" and in Acts vi. 2, "Then the *twelve* called the multitude of the disciples unto them," implying that at that time Matthias was recognised as one of the number of the apostles, or that the apostolic college was full.

2. I am willing to admit that all this was done under the full influence of inspiration, and by the sanction of the Holy Spirit. It is true that the presence of the other ten apostles on the occasion is not mentioned; that the question was submitted, not particularly to them, but to the whole of the assembled church, (Acts i. 15;) that probably the whole church acted in the selection of the successor of Judas, and voted on the occasion, (see Acts i. 15,

comp. vs. 23, 26;) and that Peter seems to have been led to the conclusion that such an election was proper by a course of reasoning on the declaration in the lxixth Psalm; but I see no reason to doubt that he acted in accordance with the will of the Great Head of the church, and under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. This would seem to be fairly implied in the general promises which the Redeemer made to the apostles in regard to the organization of the church. John xiv. 26; Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18. Whatever inferences may follow from this fact, the fact itself should be cheerfully conceded.

But, if these points are conceded, the question then is, What is the exact bearing of this case on the question, whether it was intended that the arrangement should be "permanent" in the church, and that there should be a regular "succession" of men invested with the functions of those who sustained the apostolic office? It is important, then, to look at this case just as it is presented in the New Testament; and the following *facts*, which no one will dispute, comprise all that is said in regard to it, and embrace all that can be construed into an argument in regard to the succession.

(1.) It was an election *to a vacancy*, not to a *succession* in the office. The reason which Peter gives for the election at all is that it was proper

because *a vacancy* had occurred by the death of Judas, not because it was necessary to keep up the "*succession*." One had been removed who had been chosen to fill a specific place and to accomplish a particular object, and it was important that his place should be filled. If it were possible to perpetuate the apostolic office in its peculiarity—as we have seen that it is *not*—this reasoning of Peter would be forcible to demonstrate that the number *twelve* was to be continued, and that when a vacancy occurred, it was to be supplied by election; but it is of no force whatever to demonstrate that there must be a "succession" of an unlimited number, and that the office was to be transmitted by embracing hundreds or thousands in the "apostolic college" in every successive age. The argument of Peter is, that Judas was "numbered with them, and had obtained part in the same ministry" with them; that he had fallen from this office, and that it was predicted that another should take "his" place; and that, such being the case, it was proper to appoint another, having the proper qualifications, who might be, as Judas would have been had he lived, a "witness of the resurrection" of the Saviour. In all this there is not one word about a "succession;" not an intimation that it was to be a permanent arrangement; not a hint that the original number was ever to be enlarged or to have any other qualifications than the original apostles

had—the qualifications which made them competent to bear witness of the resurrection of the Saviour. There is all the difference imaginable between the power *to fill a vacancy in an office*, and *a power to perpetuate an* ORDER *of men*—and especially if that "order" is to be indefinitely enlarged.

(2.) It was an election by the church, and not particularly by the apostles. Indeed, it is only from the probability that the apostles *would* be present on such an occasion that there is any reason to believe that they *were* there, for they are not mentioned. The address of Peter was made to the "disciples," who are said to have been "about a hundred and twenty," (Acts i. 15;) and it is manifest from the narrative that the votes in the case were given by them. No intimation is furnished that any others voted than those before whom the proposition of Peter was made; and it is morally certain that if the vote had been given only by the apostles, such a fact would have been stated. This account shows that the apostles did not mean *of themselves* to appoint successors; but, so far as it goes, it shows that the selection was made by the body of the communicants in the church. If they had been intrusted with a special commission to continue their "peculiar order," and to "transfer their authority," as a permanent arrangement, it is scarcely credible that the execution of this should have been left to the body of communicants. At all events, this has

much more of a democratic aspect than is found now in Episcopacy. In the whole of the speech of Peter, he never breathes a note of either himself or his fellow-apostles conferring apostolic power on Matthias, or on any one else. He submitted the nomination in the most anti-Episcopal manner to the whole of the disciples, and then referred the final decision to the Lord. "*They* appointed two, Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias." The fair and obvious construction of this is, that it was done by the "hundred and twenty disciples" to whom Peter had submitted the proposition respecting the necessity of electing one to fill the vacancy.

(3.) The purpose for which Matthias was chosen is specifically mentioned. It was that he might be, in the proper sense of the word, as explained above, an apostle—a "*witness*" of the resurrection of the Saviour. "Wherefore, of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us—*must one be ordained* TO BE A WITNESS *with us of his resurrection*," (ver. 21, 22.) Here the same object is referred to which is specified by the Saviour as implied in the nature of the apostolic office—to be his *witnesses* to the world. In order to divest this of all doubt as to what was intended in the case, Peter specifies all the qualifications which were necessary in the election. He who was to be chosen was to have just

such qualifications as to fit him to be a competent "*witness*" of the resurrection of the Saviour. In order to that, it was indispensable that he should have been with him; that he should have been familiar with his person and his instructions, that he might thus be qualified to bear witness to his identity after his resurrection. Accordingly, Peter says that it was necessary that he should have been with them "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day when he was taken up from them," (ver. 21, 22;) thus embracing the entire period of his public ministry, his crucifixion, and the forty days in which he appeared to his disciples after his resurrection. It was to bear witness to these things, as we have seen, that the apostles were originally chosen; and it was for this specific purpose that Matthias was selected in the room of one who would have been abundantly qualified for this had he lived. In all that Peter says on this subject, there is not an intimation of the necessity of any other qualification than this; there is no hint that he ought to be endowed with uncommon talents, eloquence, or learning; there is no allusion to any power, control, or jurisdiction that he was to exercise over the churches; there is no suggestion that he was to perform the ceremony of "confirmation," or that he was to take the jurisdiction over a particular district or "diocese;" nor is there any

allusion to any such fact as that he was to *transmit* his power and authority to "successors." The purpose was specific; it was just that for which all the apostles had been called by the Saviour.

These are the simple *facts* in regard to the election of Matthias. It is to be remembered now that this is the only case of an election to the apostolic office recorded in the New Testament. The only other apostle, respecting whose authority and rank there is no dispute, was Paul. He was called directly from heaven, without any arrangement, election, designation, or ordination by the other apostles; and he was qualified for the peculiarity of the apostolic office by having been permitted, in a miraculous manner, to see the Saviour after his resurrection. "Am I not an apostle? *Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?*" 1 Cor. ix. 1. When James, the brother of John, was put to death by Herod, (Acts xii. 1,) there was no election to supply his place, nor is there any mention that as the apostles died their places were supplied. The purpose of the original appointment of twelve—a competent number to establish the important truth of the resurrection of Jesus—had been accomplished when they died; and it was alike useless and impossible to continue the succession—*useless* because the twelve had testified to the world the fact of his resurrection in such a manner as to secure the permanent establishment of the Christian religion; and

impossible because the original witnesses of the resurrection of the Redeemer died. How *could* an order of men be kept up in the world from age to age, qualified to be "witnesses" of his resurrection?—It is left, then, to the judgment of all to determine with what propriety the case of Matthias is referred to as an evidence that it was designed that there should be a permanent arrangement in the church to perpetuate the apostolic office, or to continue the appointment of an order of men of "superior qualifications and rank" in the ministry. If the very first link fails, all the others will be likely to fail also.

The next case on which reliance is placed by the advocates of Episcopacy is, that of Barnabas. The argument in support of his claims to the apostleship is based mainly on the fact that the *name* apostle is given to him. Acts xiv. 14: "Which when the *apostles* Barnabas and Paul heard of, they rent their clothes." See the tract "Episcopacy tested by Scripture," p. 18, and Bishop McCoskry's Sermon, p. 24. In connection with the fact that the *name* apostle is given to Barnabas, it is urged by the author of the tract that the transaction recorded in Acts xiii., by which Paul and Barnabas were designated to a particular work, and in the performance of which they are called "apostles," was not an "ordination" in the peculiar sense of the word, but a mere designation to a special missionary

service; and that, as the term "apostle" belonged of right to *Paul* before this, so it is to be inferred that the same designation belonged to Barnabas, and to each of the others who were there named—"Simeon, and Niger, and Lucius, and Manaen." Tract, pp. 16, 17. The argument is, that if this were not an "ordination," the name "apostle" was not given to them in virtue of this transaction, but must have appertained to them before.

As this is a point of some importance, and as it is an argument much insisted on by Episcopalians, that because the name *apostle* is given to certain men in the New Testament, therefore they were of a grade superior in rank to other "clergy," and that the "order" was designed to be perpetuated, it is important first to examine the meaning of the word "apostle," and then to inquire in what sense it is applied to Barnabas. The word ἀπόστολος—*apostle,* meaning *one sent forth, a messenger*—occurs in the New Testament eighty-one times. It is applied to the following persons:—(1.) To the Saviour himself, as *sent* from God—the Great Apostle to the world. Heb. iii. 1. Compare here the numerous places where the Saviour says he was "*sent*" from God into the world. (2.) To the original number whom the Saviour chose to be *his* apostles to the world. Matt. x. 2; Mark vi. 30; Luke vi. 13; ix. 10; xi. 49; xvii. 5; xxii. 14; xxiv. 10; Acts i. 2, 26; ii. 37, 42, 43; iv. 33, 35–37; v. 2,

12, 18, 29, 34, 40; vi. 6; viii. 1, 14, 18; ix. 27; xi. 1; xiv. 4; xv. 2, 4, 6, 22, 23, 33; xvi. 4; Rom. xvi. 7; 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29; xv. 7; Gal. i. 17, 19; Eph. ii. 20; iii. 5; iv. 11; 1 Thess. ii. 6, 11; 2 Pet. i. 1; ii. 1; iii. 2; Jude 17; Rev. xviii. 20; xxi. 14. (3.) To Paul, reckoned as an apostle, and especially endowed for this purpose by having had a miraculous view of the Saviour after his ascension. Acts xiv. 14; Rom. i. 1; xi. 13; 1 Cor. i. 1; ix. 1, 2; xv. 9; 2 Cor. i. 1; xii. 12; Gal. i. 1; Eph. i. 1; Col. i. 1; 1 Tim. i. 1; ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 1, 11; Titus i. 1. (4.) To Barnabas *in one instance only:* Acts xiv. 14. (5.) To certain "brethren" who accompanied Titus when he was sent by Paul to Corinth, and who are called "the messengers of the churches"—*ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν—the apostles of the churches.* The number and names of these persons are unknown, but the only *rank* which they sustained was that of being *sent* from one church to another. 2 Cor. viii. 23. (6.) In a similar sense it is applied in Phil. ii. 25, to Epaphroditus, *sent* by the church at Philippi to Rome, to supply the wants of Paul when a prisoner there. (7.) It is applied to any one who is sent to perform *any* office whatever. "The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither is *he that is sent* (*οὐδὲ ἀπόστολος*—neither *the apostle*) greater than he that sent him." John xiii. 16.

These passages show the sense in which the word

is used in the New Testament, and the true force of any argument that may be derived from its use. It means properly *one who is sent*, and may be used with reference to one who is sent for any purpose, and may be applied, therefore, to any minister of religion, or to any one *sent* for a specific object, who is not even a minister of religion. The mere use of the word, therefore, proves nothing in respect to the matter under consideration. The argument relied on by the Episcopalian is, that the fact that the *word* is applied to an individual proves that he was *an apostle* in the strict and proper sense. But, in order to the validity of this argument, it is necessary to believe that the word is used in no *other* sense in the New Testament; and this would prove, not only that Barnabas was an apostle properly so called, but that Epaphroditus was, and that *all* the messengers whom Paul sent with Titus were; and that any one who was ever *sent* for any purpose was called an "apostle" in the strict and proper sense. If the Episcopalians, therefore, insist on it that the fact that the *name* "apostle" was given to Barnabas or Silas proves that they were apostles, and that the "order" was intended to be "continued," then we insist on it that the church at Philippi sent a prelatical bishop—Epaphroditus—to "minister to the wants of Paul," and that Paul sent a whole company of "apostles," or prelatical bishops, on a general exploring tour through Greece, or more likely

on a visit to a particular church there. 2 Cor. viii. 23. But, as this consequence will not be conceded by Episcopalians, it follows that the argument on which they rely, derived from the fact that the *name* "apostle" is given to Barnabas, is worthless. In fact, it is known to be worthless by Episcopalians themselves. Dr. Onderdonk himself practically concedes it in the following judicious observation, Tract, p. 13:—"*A little reflection and practice will enable any of our readers to look in Scripture for the several sacred* OFFICES, *independently of the* NAMES *there or elsewhere given to them.*" The truth is, in regard to this word, and to all others, that the specific sense in which it is used is to be determined by the connection and the circumstances.

Let us, then, inquire in regard to the case of Barnabas, whether there is any thing in the connection and circumstances where the term is applied to him, which shows that he was an apostle in the strict and proper sense, or that it was intended that the "order" should be perpetuated through him.

The only instance in which the word *apostle* is applied to Barnabas, as has already been remarked, is in Acts xiv. 14:—"Which when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of, they rent their clothes." Now, to see the *fair* and *proper* meaning of the word, as here applied to Barnabas, we

may advert to the following considerations:—(1.) There is no account that Barnabas was ever elected, ordained, or appointed, in any way, to the apostolic office. There is a particular account of the election of Matthias, and of the manner in which Paul was selected and set apart to be an apostle; but there is no intimation that Barnabas was ever chosen in any manner for that office. (2.) Barnabas is repeatedly mentioned in the New Testament, but in no other instance as an apostle. He first appears in Acts iv. 36, where it is said that he came with other converts having property and laid it at the apostles' feet. He is then mentioned (Acts xi. 22) as having been sent by the "church in Jerusalem" to Antioch, on occasion of a revival of religion there, and an account of his success as a preacher is there given. He is then referred to as having voluntarily gone to seek the apostle Paul at Tarsus, to induce him to come to Antioch. At this time, Paul and Barnabas laboured together a whole year at Antioch, but there is no intimation that he was ordained to the apostleship. Acts xi. 26. He is then mentioned as going up to Jerusalem with Paul in a time of famine to carry to afflicted Christians there the benefactions of the church at Antioch. Acts xi. 30. In Acts xii. 25, it is said that, having accomplished this, Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, taking with them John Mark. Subsequently, Barnabas and Paul are mentioned as

travelling companions, and Barnabas is not adverted to except in connection with Paul. Acts xiii. 1, 2, 50; xiv. 12; xv. 2, 12, 37; 1 Cor. ix. 6; Gal. ii. 1, 9, 13; Col. iv. 10. In all this, however, there is no intimation that he was ever selected and ordained to the apostolic office. In the numerous instances in which he is mentioned, the name apostle is never given to him but once. (3.) The *reason* why the name was given to him on that occasion, it is not difficult to understand. It was not because he was in the proper sense of the term an "apostle," but in the same sense in which Epaphroditus was the "apostle" of the church at Philippi, (Phil. ii. 25,) and as the "brethren" sent with Titus were the "apostles" of the churches, (2 Cor. viii. 23;) that is, they were the *messengers* of the churches. We find the following account of an important transaction in relation to Barnabas *before* this name is given to him at all. In the church at Antioch there were "certain prophets and teachers, as *Barnabas*, and Simeon, and Lucius, and Manaen, and *Saul*." The rank which they together sustained was that of "prophets and teachers;" and the only title which appears to have been conferred on Barnabas was that of a "prophet and teacher." *That* also appertained to Paul, though from many other places we also know that before this he was entitled to the proper name of an *apostle*. As these "prophets and teachers" ministered to the Lord

and fasted, "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia." Acts xiii. 1–5. Now, two things are manifest in this account. The first is, *that this was not an ordination to the apostolic office.* This is perfectly apparent from the face of the transaction, for (*a*) Paul was an apostle before; (*b*) the persons engaged in the ordination, if it were an ordination, were not themselves apostles; (*c*) the *purpose* for which they were set apart is particularly specified, and that is a distinct design from the apostolic office. Indeed, so clear is this, that Dr. Onderdonk has admitted that this *was not an ordination at all.* Tract, pp. 16, 17: "If it was not an ordination," says he, "*as it certainly was not*, it was a mere setting apart of those two apostles (?) to a particular field of duty." "That this transaction at Antioch related only to a special missionary 'work,' will be found sufficiently clear by those who will trace the progress of Paul and Barnabas through that work from Acts xiii. 4, to xiv. 26, where its completion is recorded." "This call, therefore, this separation, this work, related only to a particular mission, and this laying on of hands was no ordination." The second thing apparent from this account is, that this setting apart to a

particular work laid the foundation for the appropriate designation of Barnabas and Paul as "apostles," in the sense that they were the *messengers of the churches.* They were designated to a particular "missionary work." They were "sent forth" to accomplish this. They are designated *as* thus sent forth, or as *apostles* or *messengers* of the church, by the inspired historian, (comp. Phil. ii. 25; 2 Cor. viii. 23,) and all the circumstances of the case are met by this supposition. (4.) This view is confirmed by a fact which can be explained on no other supposition, that the name *apostle* is never given to Barnabas subsequent to his fulfilling this missionary appointment with the apostle Paul. He is repeatedly mentioned after this, but in no case as an apostle. No instance is referred to of his performing any other functions than those of a travelling companion of the apostle Paul as a preacher and a beloved brother; nor is there an intimation that he sustained any other "rank," or belonged to any other "order" than that which appertained to all who were preachers of the gospel. With what propriety, then, is he pressed into the service of Episcopacy? And what must be the real strength of that cause which is constrained to rely on *such* an instance to prove that there was such "an arrangement persevered in as to prove that the apostolic

order was to be permanent" in the church to the end of the world?

The next case relied on by Episcopalians is "James, the brother of our Lord." Tract, p. 15. "James, the Lord's brother," is *once* mentioned as an apostle. Gal. i. 19. But it should be remembered that there were *two* of the name of *James* among the apostles, in the specific sense of the term, viz. James the brother of John and son of Zebedee, and *James the son of Alpheus*. Matt. x. 3; Luke vi. 15. Nor should it be forgotten that the word *brother* was used by the Hebrews to denote a relation more remote than that which is designated by the ordinary use of the word among us, and that Alpheus was probably a connection of the family of our Lord. What proof, then, is there that he was not referred to in the passage before us?

Silvanus and Timothy are the next mentioned. As their claim to be considered *apostles* rests on the same foundation, so far as the *name* is any evidence, these cases will be disposed of by considering that of Timothy at length in a subsequent part of the argument.

The other cases are those of Andronicus and Junia. The foundation for their claim to be enrolled as apostles is the following mention of them by Paul, Rom. xvi. 7:—"Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, *who are of note among the*

apostles," *οἵτινές εἰσιν ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις.* On this claim I remark: (1.) Admitting that they are here *called* apostles, the name, as has been proved, does not imply that they had any "superiority of ministerial rights and powers." They might have been distinguished as messengers, like Epaphroditus. (2.) It is clear that Paul did not *mean* to give them the name of *apostles* at all. If he had designed it, the phraseology would have been different. Compare Rom. i. 1; 1 Cor. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 1; Phil. i. 1. (3.) All that the expression *fairly* implies is, that they, having been early converted, (Rom. xvi. 7,) and being acquainted with the apostles at Jerusalem, were held *in high esteem by them;* that is, the apostles regarded them with confidence and affection.

The next point of proof, "that the distinction between elders and a grade superior to them, in regard especially to the power of ordaining, was so persevered in as to indicate that it was a *permanent* arrangement,"—and a point much insisted on by Episcopalians,—is drawn from the charge given by the apostle Paul to the elders of Ephesus. Acts xx. 28–35. The point of this evidence is this: Paul charges the elders at Ephesus to "take heed to themselves,"—"to take heed to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers—to feed the church of God—to watch against the grievous wolves that would assail the flock," etc.

In all this, we are told, there is not a word respecting the power of ordaining, nor any thing which shows that they had the power of clerical discipline. "No power is intimated to depose from office one of their own number, or an unsound minister coming among them." They are to "tend" or "rule" the flock as shepherds; "for shepherds do not tend and rule shepherds."

This is affirmed to be the sole power of these elders. In connection with this, we are asked to read the epistles to Timothy—the power there given "personally to Timothy *at Ephesus*," (Tract, p. 23,) or as it is elsewhere expressed, "Compare now with this sum total of power assigned to mere elders, or presbyters, that of *Timothy* at Ephesus, the very city and region in which those addressed by Paul in Acts xx. resided and ministered." P. 25. It is said by Episcopalians that in those epistles the "right of governing the clergy and ordaining, is ascribed to him personally;" and numerous undisputed passages are adduced by them to show that Timothy is addressed as having this power. 1 Tim. i. 18; iii. 14, 15; iv. 6; 1 Tim. i. 3; v. 19–21, etc. etc.

Now, this argument proceeds on the following *assumptions*, viz. 1. That Timothy was called an apostle, and was therefore invested with the same powers as the apostles, and was one of their *successors* in the office. 2. That he was, at the time

when Paul gave his charge to the elders at Miletus, *bishop* of Ephesus. 3. That the "elders" summoned to Miletus were ministers of the gospel of the second order, or, as they are now usually termed, *priests*, in contradistinction from bishops and deacons. If these points are not made out from the New Testament, or if any one of them fails, this argument for Episcopacy will be of no value.

The first claim is, that Timothy is called an "apostle," and was, therefore, clothed with apostolic powers. The *proof* on which this claim is made to rest is contained in 1 Thess. i. 1, compared with 1 Thess. ii. 6. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy are joined together in the commencement of the epistle, as writing it to the church at Thessalonica; and in ch. ii. 6, the following expression occurs: "Nor of man sought we glory—when we might have been burdensome as the *apostles* of Christ." This is the sole proof of the *apostleship* of Timothy, of which so much is made in the Episcopal controversy, and which is usually appealed to as of itself sufficient to settle the question.

Perhaps there is no point in this controversy asserted with more confidence, or more relied on by Episcopalians, than that Timothy was an "apostle," and was "bishop" or *prelate* of Ephesus. It is of importance, therefore, to show how this matter is in the New Testament; and having disposed of this

case, the argument about the immediate "successors" of the apostles is at an end.

Now, without insisting on the point which has been made out, that the apostolic office was conferred not to impart "superiority of ministerial rights and powers," but to bear "*witness*" to the great events in the life and teachings of the Saviour, the claim will be disposed of by the following considerations:

1. The passage in 1 Thess. ii. 6 does not fairly imply that Timothy was even *called* an apostle. For it is admitted (Tract, p. 15) that "it is not unusual for St. Paul to use the plural number of himself only." It is argued, indeed, that the words "apostles," and "our own souls," (v. 8,) being inapplicable to the singular use of the plural number, the "three whose names are at the head of the epistle are here spoken of jointly." But if Paul used the plural number as applicable to himself, would it not be natural for him to continue its use, and to employ the adjectives connected with it in the same number? Besides, there is conclusive evidence that Paul did *not* intend to include the "three" named at the head of the epistle in this expression in ver. 6. For in the verses immediately preceding the following language occurs: "*We* had suffered before, and were shamefully treated, as ye know, at Philippi," etc. Now it is capable of demonstration that Timothy was not present at that

time, and was not subjected to those sufferings at Philippi. Acts xvi. 12, 19; xviii. 1–4. It follows, therefore, that Paul did *not* intend here to imply that "the three named at the head of the epistle" were apostles, and that he intended to speak of himself alone in ver. 6. That this is so, is evident from chap. iii. In ver. 1 of that chapter Paul uses the plural term also: "When *we* could no longer forbear, *we* thought it good to be left at Athens alone." Comp. ver. 5. "For this cause, when *I* could no longer forbear, *I* sent to know your faith." From this it is clear that Paul, when he uses the plural here, refers only to *himself*, and that Timothy and Silas are associated with him in chap. i. 1, not as having *apostolic authority*, but for the mere purpose of salutation or kind remembrance.

2. Our next proof that Timothy was not an apostle is, that he is *expressly distinguished* from Paul as an apostle; that is, in the same verse Paul is careful to speak of *himself* as an apostle, and of Timothy as *not* an apostle. Thus, 2 Cor. i. 1: "Paul an *apostle* of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our brother*." Again, Col. i. 1: "Paul an *apostle* of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our brother*." Now the argument is this, that if Paul regarded Timothy as an apostle, it is remarkable that he should be so careful to make this distinction, when *his own name* is mentioned as an apostle. Why did he not also make the same honourable mention of *Timothy?*

The distinction is the more remarkable from the next consideration to be adduced, which is, that Paul is so cautious on this point—so resolved *not* to call Timothy an apostle—that when their names *are* joined together, as in any sense claiming the same appellation, it is not *as apostles*, but as *servants*. Phil. i. 1: "Paul and Timotheus, *the servants* of Jesus Christ." See, also, 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1. These considerations put it beyond debate that Timothy is *not* called an apostle in the New Testament.

The second claim for Timothy is, that he was bishop—that is, *prelate*—of Ephesus. This is commonly *assumed* by Episcopalians as an indisputable or conceded point. Indeed, so confident are they of this, that it is not deemed necessary by them to suggest any arguments in the case, but it is adverted to as if it were among undoubted historical facts. Thus, in one of the latest publications on Episcopacy, Dr. McCoskry says, "The apostle *places him* [Timothy] *over the church at Ephesus*, and gives him the power to ordain elders and deacons in the churches, as is evident from his instructions to him." Now this point should be made out, for it is not one of those which we are disposed by any means to concede. It is to be remembered, too, that it is a point which is to be made out from *the New Testament*, for our inquiry is, Whether Episcopacy can be defended "by Scripture." Let us see how this matter stands.

It may be proper here to remark, that the subscription at the close of the Second Epistle to Timothy* is admitted on all hands to be uninspired, and of no authority in the argument. Assuredly, Paul would not close a letter by seriously stating to Timothy that he wrote "a second epistle" to him, informing him that he was "ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians," and that it was "written from Rome when Paul was brought before Nero the second time." None of the subscriptions at the close of the epistles in the New Testament are of any authority whatever; several of them are undoubtedly false; and where they happen to be correct, the correctness is to be made out from other considerations than the fact that they are found there.

Now, how does the case stand in the New Testament with respect to Timothy? What testimony does it afford as to his being "bishop of Ephesus?" A few observations will show what is the real strength of the proof relied on by Episcopalians in the case:

1. It is admitted that he was *not* at Ephesus at the time when Paul made his address to the elders at Miletus. Acts xx. 17–35. Thus, Dr. Onderdonk (Tract, p. 25) says, "Ephesus was without a

* "The second epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time."

bishop when Paul addressed the elders, Timothy not having been placed over that church till some time afterward." Here, then, was one *diocese*, or one collection of churches, which is admitted to have been constituted *without a prelate*. The presumption is, that all others were organized in the same way.

2. The charge which Paul gives to the elders *proves* that Timothy was not there; and proves further, that they, at that time, *had* no prelatical bishops, and that they previously had had none. They are charged to take heed to themselves and to all the flock; "to feed" or "to rule" the flock, etc. But not one word is to be found of their having then any prelatical bishop; not one word of Timothy as their episcopal leader. Not an exhortation is given to be subject to any prelate; not an intimation that they would ever be called on to recognise any such officer. Not one word of lamentation or condolence is expressed, that they were not fully supplied with all proper episcopal authority. Now, all this is inexplicable on the supposition that they were then destitute, and that it was desirable that they should be supplied with an officer "superior in ministerial rights and powers." Nay, they are *themselves* expressly called *bishops*, without the slightest intimation that there were any higher or more honourable prelates than themselves. Acts xx. 28: "Take heed, therefore, to yourselves, and

to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *bishops*"—ἐπισκόπους.

3. It is admitted by non-Episcopalians that Timothy subsequently *was* at Ephesus, and that he was left there for an important purpose by the apostle Paul. This was when he went to Macedonia, 1 Tim. i. 3: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies." This is the *only* intimation in the New Testament, that Timothy was ever at Ephesus at all, except in the incidental statement in Acts xix. 22, that he was one of those who had there, in connection with Erastus, "ministered" to Paul: "So he [Paul] sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus." It is absolutely certain from this that Timothy was not "bishop" of Ephesus at that time; and if the fact that he was at Ephesus would prove that he was, the statement would prove that Erastus was also. It is important, then, to ascertain whether, when he was left there by Paul on his going into Macedonia, he was left there as a *permanent bishop?* Now, in settling this, I remark, it is nowhere *intimated* in the New Testament that he was such a bishop. The passage before us (1 Tim. i. 3) states, that when they were travelling together, Paul left him there, while *he* himself should go over into Mace-

donia. The *object* for which he left him is explicitly stated, and that object was *not* that he should be a permanent prelatical bishop. It is said to be—"to charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies;" that is, manifestly, to perform a *temporary* office of regulating certain disorders in the church; of silencing certain false teachers of Jewish extraction; of producing, in one word, a harmonizing effect which the personal influence of the apostle himself might have produced, but for a sudden and unexpected call to Macedonia. Acts xx. 1. Hence, it is perfectly clear that the apostle designed this as a temporary appointment for a specific object, and *that* object was not to be *prelate* of the church. Thus he says, 1 Tim. iv. 13, "*Till I come*, give attention to reading;" implying that his temporary office was then to cease. Thus, too, referring to the same purpose to return and join Timothy, he says, 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15: "These things I write unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but, *if I tarry long*, that thou mightest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God;" implying that these directions were particularly to serve him during his appointment to the *specific* business of regulating the disordered affairs caused by false teachers, and which might require the discipline of even some of the *bishops* and *deacons* of the church, ch. v. vi. These directions, involving *general* principles in-

deed, and of value to regulate his whole life, had, nevertheless, a manifest *special* reference to the cases which might occur there, in putting a period to the promulgation of erroneous doctrines by Jewish teachers.

4. The claim that Timothy was bishop of Ephesus is one that must be made out by Episcopalians from the New Testament. But this claim has *not* been made out, nor can it ever be. There is nowhere in the New Testament a declaration or an intimation that he was constituted bishop of Ephesus. No assertion, so far as the New Testament is concerned, could possibly be more gratuitous than that he was "bishop of Ephesus;" and the wonder is, that such an assertion was ever made as depending on the authority of the New Testament, or that it should continue to be persevered in. Probably, the *real* ground of confidence in those who continue to make this assertion is the subscription at the close of the Second Epistle to Timothy—a subscription whose age and author are unknown, and which is destitute of every shadow of authority.

5. The Epistle to the Ephesians shows further, that at the time when that was written, there was no prelatical bishop at Ephesus. Though, in that epistle, the apostle gives the church various instructions about the relations which existed, there is not the slightest hint that Timothy was there; nor is there the least intimation that any such

officer ever had been, or ever would be, set over them.

The evidence from this epistle deserves more notice than has been usually bestowed upon it, and, taking all the circumstances of the case into consideration, is decisive on the question whether the church there had an Episcopal bishop. The circumstances are these: (1.) If Timothy was there as a "bishop" when the epistle was written, it is remarkable that there is no allusion to him in the epistle. A total want of all mention of him would have been an act of discourtesy such as we should not expect from the apostle Paul. (2.) If he had been formerly there and was then absent, it is no less remarkable that no allusion is made to the absent "bishop" of the church. It is difficult to account for it that there is no kind reference to his labours and fidelity; no expression of a wish that the church might soon enjoy his labours again. (3.) If the church was deprived of its bishop, or had none, and this "grade of officers" was essential to the proper organization of the church, then it is equally remarkable that there is no allusion to this fact, and no exhortation to take the proper measures to complete their organization by securing the services of one of the "successors of the apostles." (4.) Very specific instructions are given in the epistle to a great variety of persons, but none in relation to the "bishop," or their duties to him.

Thus, we have special exhortations addressed to the church, ch. iv.; to husbands and wives, ch. v. 21–23; to children and fathers, ch. vi. 1–4; to servants, ch. vi. 5–8; to masters, ch. vi. 9; but not one word in regard to the prelate or their duty to him. If it be said here that the same thing is true in regard to *all* ministers, and that they are not alluded to, the answer is obvious. Paul had given them a solemn charge personally when at Miletus, (Acts xx. 17–35,) and it was not necessary to allude to the subject in the epistle. He had said to them all which it was desirable to say, and no reference, therefore, is made to the subject in the epistle.

Now, if it cannot be made out that Timothy was bishop of Ephesus, then, in reading Paul's charge to the elders at Miletus, we are to regard *them* as intrusted with the care of the church at Ephesus. It is not necessary to *our* argument at present to inquire whether they were mere ruling elders, or presbyters ordained to preach as well as to rule. All that is incumbent on us is, to show that the New Testament does not warrant the assumption that they were subject to a diocesan bishop. We affirm, therefore, simply, that Paul addressed them as intrusted with the spiritual instruction and government of the church at Ephesus, without any reference whatever to any person, either then or afterward placed over them, as superior in ministerial rights and powers. And this point is conclusively

established by two additional considerations:—first, that they themselves are expressly called *bishops*, ἐπισκόπους—a most remarkable appellation, if the apostle meant to have them understand that they were to be under the administration of *another* bishop of superior ministerial powers and rights; and, second, that they are expressly intrusted with the whole spiritual charge of the church: "Feed the church of God"—ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν κ. τ. λ. But every thing in this case is fully met by the supposition that they were invested with the simple power of *ruling*. No one can deny that the word here used in the instructions of Paul to the elders of Ephesus involves the idea of *ruling* or *governing*. It properly means to feed, pasture, guard, defend, tend, as applied to a flock, and refers to *all* the care which a shepherd would extend over his flock. This includes not merely the *feeding*, properly so called, but the attention implied in protecting them, guiding them, saving them from danger, from enemies, &c. This language, when transferred to the shepherd of souls, the minister of the church, means that he is to exercise a similar care over the flock intrusted to him, the church. The mere business of counsel and instruction, of preaching and exhortation, does not meet the full sense of the word, any more than the mere business of *feeding a flock* would embrace all that the word means when applied to a shepherd. See *Passow Lex.* The

word is used in the New Testament in the following places, and translated in the following manner: In Matt. ii. 6, Rev. ii. 27, xii. 5, xix. 15, it is rendered *rule;* and in Luke xvii. 7, John xxi. 16, Acts xx. 28, 1 Cor. ix. 7, 1 Pet. v. 2, Jude 12, Rev. vii. 17, it is rendered *feed.* In two of these places (Luke xvii. 7, 1 Cor. ix. 7) it is applied to the literal care of a flock; and in the others, where it is applied to a people, it involves the idea of government or control over them. The idea which would have been conveyed to the elders of Ephesus by the language employed by Paul would be, that they were to exercise the same care over the church which a shepherd does over his flock, or which a governor does over his people, or which the commander of an army does over his army. Every thing involved in control, care, discipline, government, would be fairly and obviously conveyed by the use of the term. It is the same language which the Saviour used when he addressed Peter, one of the apostles, in regard to the rule which he was to exercise over the church, (John xxi. 16,) and which he afterward himself addressed to the "elders" of the church, ranking himself with them as an elder, (1 Peter v. 2,)—in both places rendered "*feed;*" and is language which would *not* suggest the idea that there was a superior "grade" of ministers over them, and which would not have been used if there *had been* such a grade. The difficulty implied in

the use of this word here by Paul, as addressed to the elders at Ephesus, has been felt by all Episcopalians. Dr. Onderdonk (Tract, p. 24) asserts, in order to meet the difficulty, that the authority of the elders at Ephesus extended only to the "laity," or church members, while Timothy, their bishop, had authority over the clergy. But where is the proof of this? No such intimation is found in the address of Paul. The authority given them was "to feed, rule, or govern *the church*," of which they were the "*bishops*"—ἐπισκόπους.

Let us now state the results of our investigation, and dispose of the case of Timothy. It has been shown that he was not an apostle. It has been further shown that there is no evidence that he was bishop of Ephesus. We have thus destroyed the claim of the *permanency* of the apostolic office, so far as Timothy is concerned. And we now insist that they who wish to defend Episcopacy by "Scripture" should read the two epistles to Timothy, without the vain and illusory supposition that he was bishop of Ephesus. With this matter clear before us, how stands the case in these two epistles? I answer, thus:—

(1.) Timothy was left at Ephesus for a *special* purpose—to allay contentions, and prevent the spreading of false doctrine. The *object* for which he was left there is so explicitly stated, that there need be no occasion for ambiguity or doubt: "I be-

sought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither gave heed to fables and endless genealogies." 1 Tim. i. 3, 4. The object was not to perform the rite of confirmation, nor to take the general oversight of a diocese, nor to ordain ministers, nor to administer discipline. None of these things, which are now understood to be the proper functions of prelatical bishops, are alluded to or hinted at. It was to make use of his influence, under the authority of the apostle, to prevent the propagation of error, and to maintain the truth—a work which would fall in with the proper functions of any minister of the gospel. In this, assuredly, there was nothing that claimed peculiarly episcopal authority and rank, for it is not even now claimed as one of the peculiar rights of Episcopal bishops.

(2.) It is not intimated or implied that Timothy was ordained, constituted, or appointed there at all. The language is, "I besought *thee to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia.*" The *fact* in the case was, that Paul and Timothy had been labouring there conjointly. Neither of them was bishop of the place. Paul was himself called to go to Macedonia, but he felt that it was important for one of them to remain at Ephesus for a time, and he "*besought*" Timothy to do it. Had it not been for this request of Paul, Timothy would have gone

with him as a matter of course; that is, if he was the "bishop" of Ephesus, he would have gone off with the apostle—would have left his diocese—would have travelled to another part of the world; and it was only by the earnest exhortation of the apostle Paul that this "prelate" was induced to remain and attend to the appropriate functions of his episcopate. If Timothy was such a "bishop" as this, he set a bad example to his "apostolical successors." There are very few Presbyterian pastors who would have needed the exhortation of an apostle to remain and attend to the proper duties of his own charge.

(3.) This arrangement, as appears from the epistles, and as proved above, was to be *temporary*. Thus, Paul says that he left him there, not to be a permanent bishop of the church, but "that he might charge some that they teach no other doctrine." So far as the terms of *this* commission go, as soon as he had in a proper way delivered this charge, and so settled matters that there would not be danger that the erroneous doctrine would be taught, he would be at liberty to change the place of his labours. That this was designed to be a temporary arrangement, and not a permanent appointment to the office of a prelate, is further manifest from another statement in the epistle itself, (ch. iii. 14, 15:) "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou

mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God." Here it is evident that, whatever was the reason why the apostle was separated from him on this occasion, he expected that the cause would soon cease, and that their united labours would soon be resumed as before. Timothy was young and inexperienced, and Paul gave him such directions as would aid him in the work which was for a time intrusted to him. But suppose that Timothy was the permanent bishop of Ephesus: how incongruous and improper would it have been for Paul to say that he had given him instructions that would be adapted to direct him during his own temporary absence, and that he hoped soon to return to him again.—The same thing is implied in ch. iv. 13, of this same epistle: "*Till I come*, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." Why is the phrase "till I come" inserted, if Timothy was the established prelatical bishop over Ephesus? How can it be explained, except on the supposition that Paul regarded their separation as temporary, and that he supposed they would again resume their joint labours as they had done before, without either of them having any especial jurisdiction over Ephesus or any other "diocese"?

(4.) Timothy, as appears from the epistles, was intrusted with the right of ordination, and with the authority of government in the church, just as all ministers of the gospel are. He is charged, indeed,

to "lay hands suddenly on no man," (1 Tim. v. 22;) to "commit the things which he had heard of Paul among many witnesses, to faithful men who should be able to teach others also," (2 Tim. ii. 2;) to "put the brethren in remembrance of these things," (1 Tim. iv. 6;) to "charge some that they taught no other doctrine," (1 Tim. i. 3;) not to "receive an accusation against an elder, but before two or three witnesses," (1 Tim. v. 19;) and not to "rebuke an elder, but to entreat him as a father." 1 Tim. v. 1. These are *all* the specifications to be found in the epistles to Timothy, showing that Timothy had the right of ordaining or of governing the church intrusted to him at all, and there is not a syllable in them that contains any thing *peculiar* to the supposed office of a prelatical bishop, or that implies that Timothy had any such office. They are just such directions as would be given to any minister of the gospel authorized to preach, to ordain, to administer the ordinances of the church and its discipline—just such as are, in fact, given now to men who hold to the doctrine of ministerial parity. The "charges" which are given to Presbyterian and Congregational ministers at their ordination are almost uniformly couched in the same language which is used by Paul in addressing Timothy; nor is there any thing in those epistles which may not be, and which is not in fact, often addressed to ministers on such occasions. With just as much

propriety might some antiquary hereafter—some future advocate for Episcopacy—collect together the *charges* now given to ministers, and appeal to them as proof that the Presbyterian and Congregational churches in this country were *Episcopal*, as to appeal now to the epistles to Timothy to prove that he was a prelate.

5.) The work which Timothy was to perform, even in Ephesus, is accurately defined: "Watch thou in all things; endure afflictions; *do the work of an evangelist;* make full proof of thy ministry." Here Timothy is expressly addressed as an *evangelist.* This was his appropriate business; this, his office. There is no direction to exercise any of the peculiar functions of a prelatical bishop; there *is* that he should be faithful in performing the work of an *evangelist.* How remarkable, if he was a "successor" of the apostles in the peculiarity of their office, that the apostle should limit his instructions to his faithfully performing the comparatively humble duties of an evangelist!

(6.) The epistles themselves contain evidence of the falsehood of the supposition that there was an order of men superior to the presbyters in "ministerial powers and rights." There are but *two* orders of ministers spoken of or alluded to in them—*bishops* and *deacons.* Let the emphatic remark of Dr. Onderdonk here be borne in mind, (Tract, p. 12:) "ALL that we read in the New Testament

concerning 'bishops,' is to be regarded as pertaining to the 'middle grade;" *i. e.* nothing in these epistles or elsewhere, where this term is used, has any reference to a rank of ministers superior in ministerial powers and rights." The case, then, by the supposition of the Episcopalians, is this: Two epistles are addressed by an apostle to a successor of the apostles, designated as such, and both of which are intended to perpetuate the same rank and powers. These epistles are designed to instruct Timothy in the organization and government of the churches. They contain ample information, and somewhat protracted discussions, on the following topics: The office of a presbyter; the qualifications for that office; the office of the deacons; the qualifications for that office; the qualifications of deacons' *wives;* the proper discipline of an elder; the qualifications of those who were to be admitted to the office of *deaconesses;* the duties of masters and servants; the duties of *laymen;* the duties of Christian females. Nay, they contain directions about the apostle's *cloak* and *parchments,* (2 Tim. iv. 13;) but, from the beginning to the end, not one syllable occurs respecting the existence of a grade of officers in the church superior "in ministerial rights and powers;" not a word about their qualifications, or about the mode of ordaining or consecrating them, or about Timothy's fraternal intercourse with his brother prelates; nothing about the subjection of

the priesthood to them, or about their peculiar functions of confirmation and superintendence. In one word, taking these epistles by themselves, no man would dream that there were any such officers in existence. I ask, now, whether any candid reader of the New Testament can believe that there *were* any such officers, and that two epistles could have been written, in these circumstances, without the *slightest* allusion to their existence or powers? *Credat Judæus Apella.* Can there be found now, among all the charges which Episcopal bishops have given to their clergy, any two in which there shall not be found *some* allusion to the "primitive and apostolic order" of bishops in the churches? It remains for our eyes to be blessed with the sight of *one Episcopal charge*, reminding us in this respect of the charges of Paul to Timothy. The remarks of Archbishop Whately in relation to this are so forcible and appropriate, that it may be proper to insert them here. "It is plainly recorded," says he, "that they (the apostles) did establish churches wherever they introduced the gospel; that they ordained elders in every city, and the apostles again delegated this office to others; that they did administer the rite of baptism to their converts; and that they celebrated the communion of the Lord's supper. And besides the general principles of Christian faith and morality which they sedulously set forth, they have recorded the most earnest

exhortations to avoid 'confusion' in their public worship; to do 'all things decently and in order;' to 'let all things be done to edifying,' and not for vain-glorious display; they inculcate the duty of Christians 'assembling themselves together' for joint worship; they record distinctly the solemn sanction given to a Christian community; they inculcate due reverence and obedience to those who 'bear rule' in such a community, with censure of such as walk 'disorderly' and 'cause divisions;' and they dwell earnestly on the care with which Christian Ministers, both male and female, should be selected, and on the zeal, and discretion, and blameless life required in them, and on their solemn obligation to 'exhort, rebuke, and admonish:' *yet with all this, they do not record even the number of distinct orders of them, or the functions appropriated to each, or the degree, and kind, and mode of control they exercised in the churches.*"*

(7.) One other consideration may be added here, which is conclusive as to the question whether Timothy was the permanent prelatical bishop of Ephesus. It is, that it is certain that he did not remain permanently in that city. The only evidence that he was ever there at all is the statement in the Acts of the Apostles, (ch. xix. 22,) that he, in connection with Erastus, had then "*ministered*"

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* Kingdom of Christ Delineated, Essay II. § 10.

unto Paul, and the statement in 1 Tim. i. 3, that when Paul went into Macedonia, he left him there for a temporary purpose. I now remark, that there is the most conclusive proof that he did not long remain there. He was with the apostle at Rome during his first imprisonment, and united with him in the letters to the Colossians, Philippians, and to Philemon. Col. i. 1; Phil. i. 1; Philem. 1. He was with him in Corinth when the Epistle to the Romans was written. Rom. xvi. 21; comp. ch. xvi. 1, 23; 2 Tim. iv. 20. He had been recently imprisoned, probably at Rome, when the Epistle to the Hebrews was written. Heb. xiii. 23. There is proof that he was *not* at Ephesus when the Second Epistle to him was written, for in ch. iv. 12, Paul informs him that he "had sent Tychicus to Ephesus"—a kind of information which Paul would not have given if Timothy had been there himself at the time; and from the following verse it is evident that at the time when this epistle was written, Timothy was supposed to be at Troas: "The cloak which I left at Troas, *when thou comest*, bring with thee." How little does all this look as if Timothy were the permanent bishop of Ephesus! A man who is never mentioned as being there but for a temporary purpose; who received no charge, even in a letter addressed to him there, but such as might be given to any minister of the gospel; who is repeatedly mentioned as being elsewhere united with Paul in

his toils and trials; and of whom there is no intimation that he ever did return, or ever would return, for any purpose whatever! Such is the *strong* case on which so much reliance is placed in sustaining the enormous fabric of Episcopacy in the world!

We may now take our leave of the case of Timothy. The case of Titus, the next in order, can be despatched in fewer words. The argument in defence of the claim respecting Titus does not vary materially from that used in reference to Timothy. The only point which requires a moment's examination, in addition to what has been said in the case of Timothy, is the purpose for which he was left at Crete. Titus i. 5: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I have appointed thee." The claim of Episcopalians here is, that this indicates such a *perseverance* in the "distinction between elders and a grade superior to them," as proves that it was "to be a *permanent* arrangement." In other words, Titus was to be a *permanent* bishop of Crete, superior to the elders "in ministerial rights and powers." This claim it is necessary for them to establish from the New Testament. If there are any intimations that it was not designed to be *permanent*, they will be fatal to the argument. We affirm, then, in opposition to this claim, that the

case is fully met by the supposition that Titus, in Crete, was an extraordinary officer, like Timothy at Ephesus, appointed for a specific purpose. For, (1.) The appointment itself looks as if this was the design. Paul had himself commenced a work there, which, from some cause, he was unable to complete. That work he left Titus to finish. As it cannot be pretended that *Paul* had any purpose of becoming the permanent bishop of Crete, so it cannot be that Titus's being left to *complete* what Paul had begun is proof that he expected that Titus would be *permanent* bishop. An appointment to *complete* a work which is begun by another, when the original designer did not contemplate a permanent employment, cannot surely be adduced in proof of a permanent office. If I am employed to complete an edifice which is commenced, it does not suppose that I am to labour at it all my life; still less, that I am to have successors in the undertaking. This passage, to most unbiassed minds, would imply that Paul expected Titus, after having *completed* what he had left him to do, to leave the island of Crete, and accompany him in his travels. (2.) That this *was* the fact—that he had no expectation that Titus would be a *permanent* bishop of Crete, superior in "ministerial rights and powers"—is perfectly apparent from the direction in the same epistle, (ch. iii. 12:) "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, *be diligent to come unto me at Nicopolis.*"

Here we find conclusive proof that the arrangement respecting Titus in Crete was designed to be temporary. To suppose the contrary is to maintain a position in the very face of the directions of the apostle. Every thing in the case shows that he was an extraordinary officer, appointed for a specific purpose; and that when that work was effected, which the apostle supposed *would be* soon, he was to resume his station as his travelling companion and fellow-labourer. (3.) That this was the *general* character of Titus—that he was regarded by Paul as his companion, and as a very valuable assistant to him in his travels—is further apparent from 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13; vii. 6–13. In the former of these passages he says, that he expected to meet him at *Troas*, and intimates that his presence and help were very necessary for him: "When I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother." In the latter place, (2 Cor. vii. 6–13,) we find him the companion of the apostle Paul in Philippi: "Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all." Again, (2 Cor. xii. 18,) we find him employed on a special embassy to the church in Corinth, in respect to the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem: "I desired Titus," [that is, to go to them to receive the

collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem,] and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you?" Comp. Rom. xv. 26. And again, we find him on a mission to *Dalmatia*, (2 Tim. iv. 10:) "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia." Assuredly, these various migrations and employments do not appear as if he was designed by the apostle to be the *permanent* prelatical bishop of Crete. (4.) It is to be presumed that Titus regarded the apostolic mandate to come to him at Nicopolis, (Titus iii. 12;) that he *left* Crete in accordance with Paul's request; and as there is no intimation in the New Testament that he ever returned there, and as indeed there is not the slightest proof anywhere that he permanently resided there, or that he died there, we come to the conclusion that he was employed for a temporary purpose, and that, having accomplished it, he resumed his situation as the companion of Paul. Comp. Gal. ii. 1. It must be admitted, on all hands, that the Episcopalian cannot *prove* the contrary. Since, moreover, our supposition meets *all* the circumstances of the case, and we are able to show that this was the general character of the labours of Titus, we may dismiss his case also.

The last argument of Episcopalians to prove the "apostolical succession" is derived from the epistles

to the seven churches of Asia. Rev. ii. iii. This argument is embodied in the following position: "Each of those churches is addressed, not through its clergy at large, but through its 'angel,' or chief officer; this alone is a very strong argument against parity in favour of Episcopacy." "One of those churches is Ephesus; and when we read concerning its angel, '*thou* hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars,' do we require further evidence that what Timothy, the chief officer there, was in the year 65, in regard to the supreme right of discipline over the clergy, the same was its chief officer when this book was written, in 96?" The singular number, it is added, is used emphatically in the address to each of the angels, and "the individual called 'the angel' is, in each case, identified with his church, and his church with him."

The force of this argument can be founded only on the supposition that the epistles to those churches are addressed to *an individual* called "the angel of the church," and that this individual could be no other than a prelatical bishop. It is indispensable that each of these points should be made out, or the argument is worthless. It will not do to argue, because Timothy was *once* left by Paul in Ephesus, in the year "65," that *therefore* there was a "bishop" there in "96." We have seen that Timothy did not long remain there; that he

was subsequently with the apostle Paul; and there is not the slightest intimation in the New Testament that in that interval of thirty-one years a "successor" was appointed. Whence, then, is the ground of the inference that thirty-one years afterward, this individual, addressed as "the angel of the church," was the "successor" of Timothy? The argument from the "angels" of the seven churches, so strenuously urged and defended by Episcopalians, involves also the following assumptions:—

(1.) That there was an *inferior* body of clergymen, called "clergy at large." *Assuming* this point, it would not be difficult to make out an argument from the address "to the angel." But this is a point *to be proved*, not to be assumed. Where is there found, in the New Testament, an intimation of the existence of an order of "*clergy at large*" in these churches? In the epistles themselves, there is not the slightest *hint* of the existence of any such personages distinct from "the angels." Nay, the very style of address is strong presumption that there were not any such inferior clergymen. The only mention which occurs is of *the angel* and *the church*. We hear nothing of an intermediate order; nothing of any supremacy of "the angel" over "the clergy at large;" not the least intimation of any duty to be performed by the supposed prelatical "angel," toward the inferior presbyters. Why is all reference to them omitted,

if they had any existence? Is it customary, in addressing "bishops" *now*, to omit all reference to their duties over the inferior "clergy at large"? This is a point of too much consequence to be left unguarded; and accordingly the rights and duties of the order which is regarded as superior "in ministerial rights and powers" are sedulously marked out and inculcated.

(2.) It must be *assumed*, in this argument, that there were in each of those cities more churches than one; that there was a circle or confederation of churches, which would answer to the modern notion of a "diocese," over which "the clergy at large," of *inferior* "ministerial rights and powers," might exercise a modified jurisdiction. If this is not assumed, the argument has no force; since, if there was but *one* church in each of those cities, the "angel" was *not* a bishop in the Episcopal sense, but a pastor in the ordinary acceptation of the term. Now this is a point which, in an argument like this, should not be *assumed*. It should be *proved*, or at least rendered highly probable, from the New Testament. But there is not the slightest hint of any such divided and scattered diocesan organization. In each instance, the church is addressed as one and undivided. "The angel of *the church*," not *the churches*, "of Ephesus," Rev. ii. 1; "The angel of *the church* in Smyrna," ii. 8; "the angel of *the church* at Thyatira," ii .18; "the angel

of *the church* in Sardis," iii. 1, &c. In every instance the address is the same. The point of inquiry now is, whether in this address the Saviour meant to intimate that there was a *plurality* of churches—an ecclesiastical, diocesan organization? This is a point for Episcopalians to *prove*, not to *assume*. The presumption is directly *against* the Episcopalians. It is, that the apostles would not organize separate churches in a single city; and that, if it were done, they would be specified as *the churches*. Accordingly, we learn that the apostle organized "a church" at Corinth. 1 Cor. i. 1, 2. Thus, also, at Antioch. Acts xiii. 1. Thus, also, at Laodicea. Col. iv. 16. And in the address of Paul to the elders at Miletus, respecting one of the very churches under consideration, that at Ephesus, it is mentioned not as *the churches* of Ephesus, but as *the church*. Acts xx. 28: "Feed *the church* of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." When Paul addressed this same church in an epistle, it was directed, not to *the churches*, but to *the saints* at Ephesus. Eph. i. 1. But where there were *distinct* churches organized, there is a *specific* mention of the fact of the plurality; thus Acts xv. 41: "Paul went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming (*i. e.* strengthening, establishing) *the churches;*" Rom. xvi. 4: "the *churches* of the Gentiles;" 1 Cor. xvi. 1: "the *churches* of Galatia;" 1 Cor. xvi. 19: "the *churches* of Asia;" 2 Cor. viii. 1: "the *churches* in

Macedonia." See also, 2 Cor. viii. 19, 23; xi. 8; Gal. i. 22; Rev. i. 4. Now, if it is neither proved that there was a body of "clergy at large," nor that there were separate churches in each of those cities, I ask, what is the force of the argument from this case? How does it bear on the point at issue? What has it to do with the subject?

(3.) A third assumption, in supposing that this argument is of any force, is, that a "successor" to *John himself* had already been appointed at Ephesus, and that he had actually taken his place. John passed a large part of his long life there. It was from Ephesus that he was banished to Patmos. If there was a prelate at Ephesus, it is morally certain that John was himself the man Indeed, it is inconceivable, almost, that any other should have been raised to the episcopal "throne" in Ephesus, while John was himself there, or should have the right to the peculiar title of "*the angel*" of the church. It is equally improbable that in the brief interval between the banishment of the apostle and the time of addressing those epistles to the churches in the Book of Revelation, another person should have been appointed to supersede the exiled apostle. And it is equally improbable also that, if it had been so, no special allusion should have been made to this circumstance in the letter addressed to the church at Ephesus. All these circumstances are so remarkable as to render it morally certain

that no such individual as a "prelatical bishop," or a "successor of the apostles," was addressed under the title of "the angel of the church."

In reference to the term "angel," as used in the Apocalypse, I have only to remark, further, that the interpretation which makes it refer to a prelatical bishop is so unnatural and forced, that many Episcopalians are compelled to abandon it. Thus Stillingfleet, than whom an abler man, and one whose praise is higher in Episcopal churches, is not to be found among the advocates of prelacy, says, of these angels: "If many things in the epistles be directed to the angels, but yet so as to concern the whole body, then, of necessity, the angel must be taken as a *representative* of the whole body; and then, why may not the word *angel* be taken by way of representation of the body itself, either of the whole church, or, *which is far more probable*, of the *concessors*, or order of presbyters, in that church? We see what miserable, unaccountable arguments those are which are brought for any kind of government from metaphorical or ambiguous expressions, or names promiscuously used." *Irenicum.*

Archbishop Whately also abandons the common views of Episcopalians on the subject; and the views of Presbyterians, who regard it as applicable to the pastor of a single church, are sustained by his high authority. He says, "It seems plainly to have been the general, if not the universal, practice of the

apostles, to appoint over each separate *church* a *single* individual as a chief governor, under the title of "*angel*" (*i. e. messenger* or *legate* from the apostles) or "BISHOP," *i. e. superintendent* or overseer. A CHURCH and a DIOCESE seem to have been for a considerable time *co-extensive* and *identical.* And each church or diocese, (and consequently each superintendent,) though connected with the rest by the ties of faith and hope and charity, seems to have been (as has been already observed) perfectly independent as far as regards any power of control."*

With one or two additional remarks, I shall dismiss this point. The first is, that it cannot be argued from the term *angel*, given to those ministers, that they were Episcopal bishops. That term, as is well known, has no exclusive applicability to a prelate. It is nowhere else applied to the ministers of religion; and its original signification, "a messenger," or its usual application to celestial spirits, has no special adaptedness to an Episcopal bishop. Without any invidiousness, it may be observed that prelates have not usually evinced any such extraordinary sanctity as to appropriate this title to themselves by prescriptive right. The other remark is, that the supposition that these angels were pastors of the churches—presbyters on a parity with each other and with all others—will fully meet every thing

* Kingdom of Christ Delineated, Essay II. § 20.

which is said of them in the book of Revelation: for, (1) It is an *appropriate* appellation to designate them—as messengers sent by God to communicate his will to his people—as appointed to make known his truth; (2) there is no reason to suppose that there was more than one church in each of the cities referred to, and it is indispensable for the friend of prelacy to prove that there *was*, before he can assume that this term was *not* used to designate a pastor in the ordinary sense of that term; (3) it is a term which would designate the respect in which the office was to be held; (4) it would impress upon those to whom it was applied a solemn sense of their responsibility; and (5) it would be more *appropriately* applied to the pastor of a single church than to a prelatical bishop—to the tender, intimate, endearing relation of a pastor with his people—to the blending of sympathy, interest, and affection, where he is with them continually, meets them each week in the sanctuary, administers to them the bread of life, goes into their abodes when they are afflicted, and attends their kindred to the grave,—than to the union subsisting between the people of an extended *diocese* and a *prelate*—to the formal, unfrequent, and, in many instances, stately and pompous, visitations of a diocesan bishop—to the cold and distant connection between a people scattered into many churches, who are visited at intervals of a year or more by one claiming "a superiority

in ministerial rights and powers," robed in lawn, and with the crosier and mitre, as emblematical of office, state, and power, and one who must be a stranger to the ten thousand tender ties of endearment which bind the hearts of a pastor and his people together. The appellation thus given to a pastor of a church speaks the sentiments of our hearts, as respects the union of a pastor and people. And while I would not allow myself to speak with disrespect of the episcopal office, it cannot but be felt that the language of the Saviour, addressed through the mild and gentle John to the churches of Asia, breathes far more of the endearing "identity" of the pastoral relation, than it does of the comparatively cold and distant functions of one who, in all other lands but this, has been invested with his office by the imposing ceremony of *enthroning*, and who has borne, less as badges of affection than of authority, the crosier and the mitre.

As a proper conclusion, in regard to the claims of "bishops" to a superiority of rank among the clergy, it may be proper to state, in few words, what is the *meaning* of the term as it is used in the New Testament:

The word ἐπισκοπή—*episcope*—whence the word *episcopal* is derived, occurs but four times in the New Testament. It is translated *visitation* in Luke xix. 44, and in 1 Pet. ii. 12; *bishopric*, Acts i. 20; and in this place, *office of a bishop*. The verb from

which it is derived (ἐπισκοπέω) occurs but twice. In Heb. xii. 15, it is rendered *looking diligently*, and in 1 Pet. v. 2, *taking the oversight*. The noun rendered *bishop* occurs in Acts xx. 28; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Titus i. 7; 1 Pet. ii. 25. The verb means, properly, to look upon, behold, to inspect, to look after, see to, take care of; and the noun denotes the office of overseeing, inspecting, or looking to. It is used to denote the care of the sick, (Xeno. Œc. 15, 9; comp. *Passow;*) and it is of so general a character, that it may denote any office of overseeing or attending to. There is nothing in the word itself which would limit it to any class or grade of the ministry, and it is, *in fact*, applied to nearly all the officers of the church in the New Testament, and, indeed, to Christians who did not sustain *any* office. Thus it is applied (*a*) to believers in general, directing them to "*look diligently*, lest any one should fail of the grace of God," Heb. xii. 15; (*b*) to the elders of the church at Ephesus, "over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*," Acts xx. 28; (*c*) to the elders or presbyters of the church, in 1 Pet. v. 2, "Feed the flock of God, *taking the oversight thereof;*" (*d*) to the officers of the church in Philippi, mentioned in connection with deacons as the only officers of the church there,—"to the saints at Philippi, with the *bishops* and deacons," Phil. i. 1; (*e*) to Judas, the apostate, Acts i. 20; and (*f*) to the great Head

of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ, "the Shepherd and *Bishop* of your souls." 1 Pet. ii. 25. From this use of the term, it follows: (1.) That the word is never used to denote the *peculiarity* of the apostolic office, or so as to have any special applicability to the apostles. Indeed, the term *bishop* is *never* applied to any of them in the New Testament; nor is the word in any of its forms ever used with reference to them, except in the single case of *Judas*. Acts i. 20. (2.) It is never employed in the New Testament to designate an order of men superior to presbyters, regarded as having any other functions than presbyters, or being in any sense "successors" to the apostles. It is so used now by the advocates of prelacy, but this is a use wholly unknown to the New Testament. It is so undeniable that the name is never given in the New Testament to those who are now called "bishops," that even Episcopalians concede it. Thus, Dr. Onderdonk (Tract on Episcopacy, p. 12) says, "ALL that we read in the New Testament concerning 'bishops' is to be regarded as pertaining to the 'middle grade;' that is, to those who are now regarded as 'priests.'" This is not strictly correct, as is clear from the remarks above respecting what is called the "middle grade;" but it *is* strictly correct, so far as it affirms that it is *never* applied to prelates. (3.) It is used in the New Testament to denote ministers of the gospel who had the care or

oversight of churches, without any regard to grade or rank. (4.) It has now, as used by Episcopalians, a sense which is wholly unauthorized by the New Testament, and which, indeed, is entirely at variance with the usage there. To apply the term to a pretended superior order of clergy, as designating their peculiar office, is wholly to depart from the use of the word as it occurs in the Bible. (5.) As it is never used in the Scriptures with reference to *prelates*, it *should* be used with reference to the pastor or other officers of the church; and to be a *pastor* or overseer of the flock of Christ should be regarded as being a scriptural *bishop*.

I have now considered all that Episcopalians rely on from the Scriptures, in vindication of the existence of such an order of men as prelatical bishops. It will be remembered that the burden of proof lies on them. They advance a claim which is indispensable to the existence of their ecclesiastical polity. These are the arguments on which they rely. Whether these arguments authorize the tone of assumption which we not unfrequently hear; whether they are such as to justify the advocates of prelacy in the language which they sometimes use when speaking of those out of the pale of their denomination, as left to "the uncovenanted mercies of God;" whether they are such as to prompt, legitimately, to a very frequent reference to "the primitive and apostolic order" of the ministry, or to the modest

use of the term "*the* Church" with an exclusive reference *to themselves*,—must now be left to the judgment of my readers.

The point which I proposed to consider in regard to the claims of their "bishop" I conceive to be settled. If Episcopalians cannot make good their pretensions in reference to this office, it follows, of course, that the ministers of the gospel are on an equality. The whole argument is concentrated in this claim. We take our stand here. It is admitted on all hands that there is somewhere in the church a right to ordain. Episcopalians, with singular boldness—in not a few instances with professed, and in all with real exclusiveness—maintain that this power lies *only* in the bishop. They advance a claim to certain rights and powers; and if that is not made out, the argument is at an end. If, from the authority of the New Testament, they cannot succeed in dividing the ministers of religion into various ranks and orders, it follows that they remain on an equality.

On this point, also, they are compelled, as we conceive, to admit the whole of our argument. So manifest is it that the sacred writers knew of no such distinction; that they regarded all ministers of the gospel as on a level; that they used the same name in describing the functions of all; that they addressed all as having the same episcopal or pastoral supervision,—that even Episcopalians, after no

small reluctance, are compelled at last to admit it. They are driven to the conclusion that the term *bishop* in the New Testament does not *in a single instance* designate any such officer as now claims exclusively that title. Thus, Dr. Onderdonk says that "*That name* (bishop) *is there* (*i. e.* in the New Testament) *given to the middle order or presbyters; and* ALL *that we read in the New Testament concerning 'bishops' (including of course the words 'overseers' and 'oversight,' which have the same derivation) is to be regarded as pertaining to that middle grade. It was after the apostolic age that the name 'bishop' was taken from the second order, and appropriated to the first.*" Tract, p. 12. This admission is of inestimable value. So we believe, and so we teach. We insist, therefore, that the name *bishop* should be restored to its primitive standing. If men lay claim to a higher rank than is properly expressed in the New Testament by this word, we insist that they should assume the name *apostles*. As they regard themselves as the "successors" of the apostles, as they claim that Timothy, Titus, Andronicus, and Junia were apostles, why should not the name be retained? The Christian community could then better appreciate the force of their claims, and understand the nature of the argument. I venture to say, that if the name "apostles" were assumed by those who claim to be their successors, the Christian world would soon dis-

abuse itself of the belief of the scriptural authority of any such class of men. We admit that if "the thing sought" were to be found in the Scriptures, it would not be worth while to engage in a controversy about the mere name. But we maintain that the fact here conceded is strong presumptive proof that "the thing sought" is *not* there. The *name*, therefore, should be given up, for it is conceded by Episcopalians that it does not anywhere in the New Testament designate any such class of men as are now clothed with the episcopal office.

I remark, further, that *the thing itself* is practically abandoned by Episcopalians themselves; and an *Episcopal* ordination is, in fact, merely a *Presbyterian* ordination; and it is this fact, and not the fact that it is done by a prelate claiming to be the "successor" of the apostles, which gives to such an ordination all its validity, for even ordination is never performed in the Episcopal Church by the "bishop" alone. In the "Form and Manner of Ordering Priests," the following direction is given: "The bishop *with the priests* [presbyters] *present* shall lay their hands severally upon the head of every one that receiveth the order of priesthood; the receivers humbly kneeling, and the bishop saying: Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a priest in the church of God now committed unto thee by the imposition of OUR *hands*." There is indeed among them a difference of opinion

about the reason why this is done. One portion regards the bishop as the only source of authority.* Others suppose that the act of the presbyters expresses the assent and confidence of the churches. But, whichever opinion is maintained, it is, in fact, a Presbyterian ordination. If not, it is an unmeaning and idle ceremony, and the presence of the presbyters is mere pageantry and pomp.

Who can resist the impression, that if the New Testament had been the only authority appealed to in other times, Episcopacy would long since have ceased to urge its claims, and have sunk away with other unauthorized dynasties and dominations from the notice of mankind? On the basis which has been now examined, this vast superstructure—this system which has heretofore spread over the entire Christian world—this system which has always advanced most arrogant claims, has been reared. The world, for ages, has been summoned to submit to various modifications of the episcopal power. The world, with the single exceptions of the Waldenses and Albigenses, *did* for ages submit to its authority. The prelatical domination rose on the ruins of the liberties of cities, states, and nations, till the power of the whole Christian world was concentrated in the hands of one man—"*the servant of the servants of God!*" The exercise of that power in his hands

* Hooker's Eccl. Pol., book vii. § 6.

is well known. Equally arrogant have been its claims in other modifications. That power was felt in the days when Puritan piety rose to bless mankind and to advance just notions of civil and religious liberty. Streams of blood have flowed, and tears of anguish have been shed, and thousands of holy men have been doomed to poverty, want, and imprisonment, as the result of those claims to supremacy in the church of God. It may surprise those who peruse these pages to learn that *all* the authority from the Bible which could be adduced in favour of these enormous claims has now been submitted to their observation. Who can repress melancholy emotions at the thought that *such* power has been claimed, and *such* domination exercised by man, on so slender authority as this!

It does not accord with the design which I had in view in this argument to go into an examination of the testimony from the Fathers, nor into an inquiry into the question: What light is thrown upon the doctrine of the "apostolical succession" from the history of the church? It is perfectly clear, however, that there are two points which it is incumbent for the advocate for such a "succession" to establish. The first is, to demonstrate that, according to the New Testament, such a "succession" was *designed*. That point has been examined. The other is, to adduce positive evidence that such a succession has been *in fact* maintained. To esta-

blish the claim of prelacy, one of these points is as essential as the other. Without departing, therefore, materially from the design which I had in view, and in order to show how utterly untenable the claims of prelates are to any such "succession" from the apostles, I may here remark, that should we admit all that Episcopalians claim on the Scripture argument, there is not the slightest proof, as a matter of historical record, that the episcopal office has been transmitted from prelate to prelate to the present time, but that the pretended line has been repeatedly broken. As satisfactory evidence, I adduce the following indisputable facts:

"We are informed by many ancient historians, and very expressly by Bede, in his famous Ecclesiastical History, 'That at the request of Oswald, King of Northumberland, certain *presbyters* came (in the seventh century) from Scotland into England, and ordained bishops; that the abbot, and *other presbyters* of the island of Hy, sent Aydan for this express purpose, declaring him to be worthy of the office of bishop, and that he ought to be sent to instruct the unbelieving and the unlearned.' He informs us, that 'those presbyters ordained him and sent him to England on this errand; and that Finan, sent from the same monastery in the same island, succeeded him in the episcopal office, after having been ordained by the Scottish presbyters.'"

Upon this testimony of Bede, Baxter remarks,

"You will find that the English had a *succession* of bishops by the *Scottish presbyter's ordination;* and there is no mention in Bede of any dislike or scruple of the lawfulness of this course. The learned Dr. Doddridge refers us to Bede and Jones to substantiate the fact, that 'the ordination of English bishops cannot be traced up to the Church of Rome as its original; that in the year 668, the successors of Austin, the monk, (who came over A. D. 596,) being almost extinct, *by far the greater part* of the bishops were of Scottish ordination, by Aydan and Finan, who came out of the Culdee monastery of Columbanus, and were no more than *presbyters.*'

"And is it verily so, that the episcopal blood was thus early and extensively contaminated in England? Is it verily so, that when the effects of pious Austin's labours had become almost imperceptible, the sinking church was revived again by sending to Scotland for *presbyters* to come and *ordain a multitude* of bishops? Then it is verily a fact, that Presbyterian ordination is one of the sturdiest pillars that support the vast fabric of the Church of England. No matter if only *ten* bishops were thus ordained, the contamination, (if it be one,) having been imparted more than *eleven hundred years ago,* has had a long time to diffuse itself, and doubtless has diffused itself so extensively from bishop to bishop, that not a single prelate in Great Britain

can prove that he has escaped the infection. For what one of them can tell if he was not consecrated by bishops, who were themselves consecrated by bishops, and they by other bishops, to whom all the ordaining power they ever had was transmitted from the *presbyters of Scotland?* But this is not the whole of the evil. As no one bishop can trace his episcopal pedigree farther back, perhaps, than two or three centuries, so he cannot certainly know that any presbyter on whose head he has imposed hands has received from him any thing more than Presbyterian ordination. Nor is this all the evil. The Protestant Episcopal bishops and presbyters in America are in the same plight; for all their authority came from England. But as the English bishops who gave it to them could not *then*, and cannot *now*, certainly tell whence it came, so who knows but all the Episcopal clergy in the United States of America are originally indebted to the hands of *Elder Aydan* and *Elder Finan* for all their ministerial powers? I tremble for all Protestant Episcopal churches on both continents, if Presbyterian ordination be not VALID and SCRIPTURAL."

The point, also, that there may be a lawful ordination without a "bishop," is expressly *conceded* by Hooker:

"Now whereas hereupon some do infer that no ordination can stand but only such as is made by bishops, which have had their ordination likewise

by other bishops before them, till we come to the very apostles of Christ themselves; in which respect it was demanded of *Beza* at Poissie, by what authority he could administer the holy sacraments, &c.: to this we answer, that there may be sometimes very just and sufficient reason to allow ordination made without a bishop."

To these considerations may now be added the remarkable concession of Archbishop Whately, showing the result to which an independent and honest man, though sustaining the highest office in the Episcopal Church, is constrained to come as the result of a careful examination of the whole question of the "apostolical succession:"

"Now, what is the degree of satisfactory assurance that is thus afforded to the scrupulous consciences of any members of an Episcopal church? If a man consider it as highly *probable* that the *particular minister* at whose hands he receives the sacred ordinances is really thus apostolically descended, *this* is the very utmost point to which he can, with any semblance of reason, attain: and the more he reflects and inquires, the more cause for hesitation he will find. There is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up, with any approach to certainty, his own spiritual pedigree. The sacramental virtue (for such it is that is implied—whether the term be used or not—in the principle I have been speaking of) dependent on the imposi-

tion of hands, with a due observance of apostolical usages, by a bishop, himself duly consecrated, after having been in like manner baptized into the church, and ordained deacon and priest—this sacramental virtue, if a single link of the chain be faulty, must, on the above principles, be utterly nullified ever after in respect of all the links that hang on that one. For if a bishop has not been duly consecrated, or had not been previously rightly ordained, his ordinations are null; and so are the ministrations of those ordained by him, and their ordination of others, (supposing any of the persons ordained by him to attain to the episcopal office,) and so on, without end. The poisonous taint of informality, if it once creep in undetected, will spread the infection of nullity to an indefinite and irremediable extent.

"And who can undertake to pronounce that during that long period usually designated the Dark Ages no such taint ever was introduced? Irregularities could not have been wholly excluded without a perpetual miracle; and that no such miraculous interference existed, we have even historical proof. Amid the numerous corruptions of doctrine and of practice, and gross superstitions, that crept in during those ages, we find recorded descriptions not only of the profound ignorance and profligacy of life of many of the clergy, but also of the grossest irregularities in respect of discipline and form. We

read of bishops consecrated when mere children; of men officiating who barely knew their letters; of prelates expelled and others put in their places by violence; of illiterate and profligate laymen and habitual drunkards admitted to holy orders; and, in short, of the prevalence of every kind of disorder and reckless disregard of the decency which the apostle enjoins. It is inconceivable that any one, even moderately acquainted with history, can feel a certainty, or any approach to certainty, that amid all this confusion and corruption, every requisite form was, in every instance, strictly adhered to by men, many of them openly profane and secular, unrestrained by public opinion, through the gross ignorance of the population among which they lived; and that no one duly consecrated or ordained was admitted to sacred offices.

"Even in later and more civilized and enlightened times, the probability of an irregularity, though very greatly diminished, is yet diminished only, and not absolutely destroyed. Even in the memory of persons living, there existed a bishop concerning whom there was so much mystery and uncertainty prevailing as to when, where, and by whom he had been ordained, that doubts existed in the mind of many persons whether he had ever been ordained at all. I do not say that there was good ground for the suspicion; but I speak of the fact that it did prevail, and that the circumstances of the case

were such as to make manifest the *possibility* of such an irregularity occurring under such circumstances.

"Now, let any one proceed on the hypothesis that there are, suppose, but a hundred links connecting any particular minister with the apostles; and let him even suppose that not above one-half of this number pass through such periods as admit of any possible irregularity; and then, placing at the lowest estimate the probability of defectiveness in respect of each of the remaining fifty, taken separately, let him consider what amount of probability will result from the *multiplying* of the whole together.* The ultimate consequence must be, that any one who sincerely believes that his claim to the benefits of the gospel covenant depends on his own minister's claim to the supposed sacramental virtue of true ordination, and this, again, on perfect apostolical succession, as above described, must be involved—in proportion as he reads, and inquires, and reflects, and reasons on the subject—in the most distressing doubt and perplexity.

"It is no wonder, therefore, that the advocates

* Supposing it to be one hundred to one, in each separate case, in favour of the legitimacy and regularity of the transmission, and the links to amount to fifty, (or any other number,) the probability of the unbroken continuity of the whole chain must be computed as $\frac{99}{100}$ of $\frac{99}{100}$ of $\frac{99}{100}$, &c., to the end of the whole fifty.

of this theory studiously disparage reasoning, deprecate all exercise of the mind in reflection, decry appeals to evidence, and lament that even the power of reading should be imparted to the people. It is not without cause that they dread and lament 'an age of too much light,' and wish to involve religion in 'a solemn and awful gloom.'* It is not without cause that, having removed the Christian's confidence from a rock to base it on sand, they forbid all prying curiosity to examine their foundation.

"The fallacy, indeed, by which, according to the above principles, the Christian is taught to rest his own personal hopes of salvation on the individual claims to 'apostolical succession' of the particular minister he is placed under, is one so gross, that few are thoughtless enough to be deceived by it in any case where religion is not concerned—where, in short, a man has not been taught to make a virtue of uninquiring, unthinking acquiescence. For the fallacy consists in confounding together the unbroken apostolical succession of *a Christian ministry generally*, and the same succession in an unbroken line of *this or that individual minister*. The existence of such *an order of men as Christian ministers*, continuously from the time of the apostles to this day, is perhaps as complete a moral certainty

* Κλέπτη δέ τε νυκτὸς ἀμείνω.

as any historical fact can be; because (independently of the various incidental notices by historians of such a class of persons) it is plain that if, at the present day, or a century ago, or ten centuries ago, a number of men had appeared in the world, professing (as our clergy do now) to hold a recognised office in a Christian church, to which they had been regularly appointed as successors to others, whose predecessors, in like manner, had held the same, and so on, from the times of the apostles—if, I say, such a pretence had been put forth by a set of men assuming an office which no one had ever heard of before—it is plain that they would at once have been refuted and exposed. And as this will apply equally to each successive generation of Christian ministers, till we come up to the time when the institution was confessedly new—that is, to the time when Christian ministers were appointed by the apostles, who professed themselves eye-witnesses of the resurrection—we have (as Leslie* has remarked) a standing monument, in the Christian ministry, of the fact of that event as having been proclaimed immediately after the time when it was said to have occurred. This, therefore, is fairly brought forward as an evidence of its truth.

"But if each man's Christian hope is made to

* Short Method with Deists.

rest on his receiving the Christian ordinances at the hands of a minister to whom the sacramental virtue that gives efficacy to those ordinances has been transmitted in unbroken succession from hand to hand, every thing must depend on *that particular* minister; and *his* claim is by no means established from our merely establishing the uninterrupted existence *of such a class of men as Christian ministers.* 'You teach me,' a man might say, 'that my salvation depends on the possession by *you*—the *particular* pastor under whom I am placed—of a certain qualification; and when I ask for the proof that you possess it, you prove to me that it is possessed *generally* by a *certain class* of persons, of whom you are one, and probably by a large majority of them!' How ridiculous it would be thought, if a man laying claim to the throne of some country should attempt to establish it, without producing and proving his own pedigree, merely by showing that that country had *always been under hereditary regal government!*"*

The following decisive remarks of Whately are in exact accordance with the conclusion to which we have been led by this investigation: "*Successors in the apostolic office the apostles have none. As witnesses of the resurrection, as dispensers of miraculous gifts, as inspired oracles of divine revela-*

* Kingdom of Christ Delineated, Essay II. § 29.

tion, they have NO SUCCESSORS. But as *members, as ministers, as governors of Christian communities, their successors are the regularly admitted members, the lawfully ordained ministers, the regular and recognised governors of a regularly subsisting Christian church."**

SECT. 2.—*The Rite of Confirmation.*

The second claim in behalf of the "bishop" which is advanced by Episcopalians is, that to him appertains exclusively the office of administering the rite of confirmation. "Episcopacy declares that the Christian ministry was established in *three orders;* called, ever since the apostolic age, bishops, presbyters or elders, and deacons; of which the highest only has the right to ordain and *confirm.*" Tract of Dr. Onderdonk, p. 11. Having examined the question whether there is contemplated in the New Testament the existence of an order of men of "superior grade and rank," who should be regarded as peculiarly the "successors" of the apostles, and to whom was to be intrusted the power of ordination, or of transmitting the office of the ministry, the next question is, whether, on the supposition that there *is to be* such a body of men, the claim which is set up in their behalf, that they have the exclusive right to administer the rite of confirma-

* Kingdom of Christ Delineated, Essay II. § 43.

tion, is well founded. The inquiry, as in the former instance, will be confined wholly to the New Testament.

The first question, of course, relates to the nature of this claim, or what is intended by it by Episcopalians themselves. The nature of this rite is thus stated: "It is a *confirmation* or *ratification* on the part of those who receive it of their *baptismal engagements*, and a confirmation or *renewal* by Almighty God of all the *privileges* of their baptism."* "They [the bishops] are to confirm all who have repented and been made disciples through the washing of regeneration, (baptism,) by laying their hands upon them, and invoking the aid of the Holy Spirit, that they may continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants to their lives' end, as St. Peter and St. Paul did upon the disciples in Samaria."† "The word confirmation is applied to the religious rite of laying on of hands, because the young person then *confirms* and ratifies, in his own person, the vows which had been made for him at baptism; and the bishop *confirms* and strengthens him in his pious resolutions, by prayer and the imposition of hands. The simple design of it is, that those who

* See Religious Tracts, No. 110, published by the Episcopal Female Tract Society of Philadelphia, and "The Candidate for Confirmation Instructed," by Bishop Hobart, p. 4.

† "Episcopal Bishops the Successors of the Apostles." Sermon by Bishop McCoskry, p. 45.

have been devoted to God in infancy in the sacrament of baptism, may, when they come to years of discretion, take upon themselves the solemn engagements which were made for them by their godfathers and godmothers, by a public and direct acknowledgment and *confirmation* of their baptismal covenant with God, before the bishop and the whole church; and that they may receive the benefit of public prayer and episcopal benediction, with the ancient and scriptural rite of laying on of hands, in order that they may be so *confirmed* and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, as to be enabled to perform their vows and adorn their Christian profession, and may be afterward admitted to the Lord's table, as complete members of the visible church."*

In these accounts of the nature and design of this rite, probably the great body of Episcopalians would agree. If some who are called "high churchmen" should attach a higher efficacy to it, and should claim for it that it is necessarily, when properly administered, connected with the gift of the Holy Spirit, still it would be unfair to ascribe this belief to all in the Episcopal Church, or even to represent it as the common opinion. All persons have a right to state their own belief, and it is illegitimate

* Address to Young Persons about to be Confirmed. By Daniel Wilson, D.D., Bishop of Calcutta. Philadelphia, 1842. Pp. 6, 7.

in an argument to attribute to them more than they profess to hold. The account here given of the nature and design of this rite, will be the one that will be kept in view in the inquiry respecting its scriptural authority.

It is claimed for this rite by all Episcopalians that it is based on the authority of the Bible; and it is in this view only that it becomes a subject of inquiry in this argument. Thus, Bishop Wilson says: "This rite is derived from the practice of the apostles. We are informed, that when the inhabitants of Samaria had been converted and baptized, and had received the word of God, the apostles St. Peter and St. John were sent to lay their hands on these new converts, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. Acts viii. 14–17. And the disciples of Ephesus, after they had been baptized in the name of Jesus, were confirmed by St. Paul, who laid his hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost. Acts xix. 1–7. It seems evident that the apostle Paul alludes to the continuance of this rite, as an ordinary means of strengthening the faith of Christians, by joining it with baptism, and describing both as among the first principles of the oracles of God. Heb. v. 12; vi. 1, 2." Pp. 7, 8. "The rank which the 'laying on of hands' holds in this verse, (Heb. vi. 1, 2,) among 'the principles of the doctrine of Christ,' proves that it refers to confirmation. Imposition

of hands was indeed employed in conveying the ministerial authority; and by the same ceremony the sick were healed and pious and holy men invoked blessings on the objects of their regard. These acts cannot, however, be denoted by the laying on of hands to which the apostle refers; which, being stated as a 'principle of the doctrine of Christ,' must refer to all Christians. But these acts related not to all Christians: only to the ministry, who, by the laying on of hands, received the ministerial authority; to the sick, who, by this rite, were healed; or to the individuals on whom, by this ceremony, pious men invoked blessings. These acts, therefore, of the imposition of hands, could not be ranked among the 'principles of the doctrines of Christ' in the same station with 'repentance,' with 'faith,' with 'the resurrection of the dead,' and with 'a judgment to come.' We must, therefore, refer this appellation to that rite which universally prevailed in the primitive church, and which is known in modern times by the name of confirmation."*

These quotations settle the point—which, indeed, there would be no hesitation in admitting—that, in the estimation of Episcopalians, this rite rests on the authority of the Scriptures. It is practised not

* Bishop Hobart, "The Candidate for Confirmation Instructed," pp. 4–6. See also the Tract on Confirmation, pp. 5, 6, and Hooker's Eccl. Pol., vol. i. pp. 658–666.

as a mere matter of expediency, not as a ceremony of human prudence, but as directed by the word of God. It is claimed, also, that it is a rite not to be performed by all the ministers of religion, but exclusively by prelates as the successors of the apostles, and as being one of the objects for which there is continued in the church, from age to age, a rank of clergy of superior "order." It is only with reference to this question that it is proposed now to examine it. Were it a mere matter of human prudence—a regulation which experience had shown to be useful—a decent and solemn form of admission into the church adopted by Episcopalians—no more objection could lie against it than against any of the forms adopted by other denominations in admitting members to their communion. All churches have found it desirable to prescribe some method by which the profession of faith shall be indicated, or by which candidates shall be admitted to their fellowship; and, in itself considered, the method of admitting them by what is called "confirmation"—by a public presentation before the church and congregation—by reverent kneeling—and by the imposition of the hands of a pastor, and by prayer—would be as solemn and appropriate as any other method, and might be adopted without endangering either the orthodoxy or the spirituality of any church. But when the claim is set up to *scriptural authority* in the case, the subject assumes quite another

aspect. Then it is taken out of the inquiries relating to human prudence and expediency, and placed on the basis of obligation. Then, if this claim is substantiated, it is binding not only on Episcopalians, but on all who profess to be Christians; and then also the churches which do not admit the regulation are guilty of renouncing one of the rites appointed by the Redeemer, and the individuals who are connected with those churches are excluded from one of the important means of grace appointed by him to promote the spirituality and the comfort of his people. For the vindication, then, of those churches, and for the purpose of showing that those who have been admitted to the church without the imposition of the hands of a "bishop," are not guilty of violating the rules of the great Head of the church, I propose to demonstrate that this claim of scriptural authority for the rite of confirmation is wholly unfounded.

Before proceeding to examine the authorities relied on, it may be proper to remark that no argument can be derived from the use of the English word "*confirm*" in the New Testament. It is said of Paul and Barnabas that they went to "Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, *confirming*—ἐπιστηρίζοντες—the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith." Acts xiv. 22. And again of Paul, that "he went through Syria and Cilicia *confirming*—ἐπιστηρίζων—the

churches." Acts xv. 41. So of Judas and Silas it is said, that "being prophets themselves," they "exhorted the brethren with many words, and *confirmed*—ἐπεστήριξαν—them." Acts xv. 32. The word here used occurs in no other places in the New Testament than those just referred to, and means, properly, to "*set or place firmly upon, to let lean upon.*" (Robinson's Lexicon.) The essential idea in the word is that of *strengthening* or *imparting strength, confirming* or *upholding that which is feeble*, &c. The word as so used has no reference to any particular rite of religion. Nothing is said or intimated of the act of confirmation being done by the imposition of hands, nor is there the slightest reason to suppose that this was practised in the cases referred to. All that the word fairly implies is, that it was done by instruction, counsel, exhortation, and prayer. The truth was, that these were young converts; that they were surrounded by enemies, and exposed to temptation; that they had as yet but a slight acquaintance with the gospel; and that it was therefore important that they should be further instructed and established in the faith of Christianity. There is not the slightest evidence that they had not been admitted to all the privileges of the church before, or that any *ceremony* whatever was now performed in confirming or strengthening them. Whatever may be adduced in favour of this rite, *these* passages will not be claimed

in its defence by intelligent Episcopalians. But these are all the passages in the New Testament, where the English word "*confirm*" is used, where it could possibly be supposed to have reference to this rite; and these are never adduced by intelligent Episcopalians as furnishing any support for it.

In examining the claim for the scriptural authority for confirmation, and the question whether it should be retained in the church as a religious rite, I submit the following remarks:—

(1.) In the New Testament, the act of laying on of hands, appealed to in support of this claim, was uniformly connected with imparting the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. That the apostles did lay their hands on the disciples which they made, or on young converts, is indisputable; but the design was specific, and is mentioned in each case. And yet there are but two instances of the "laying on of hands" on converts to the Christian faith referred to in the New Testament, in both of which there need be no possible danger of mistaking the object and the effect, and in neither of them is the effect stated which is claimed for the rite of "confirmation." The first occurs in Acts viii. 14–17: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John; who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for as yet he was fallen

upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." Now, the only material question in regard to this passage as a proof-text for the rite of confirmation is, whether it refers to "the ordinary grace of the Holy Spirit which is necessary to enlighten and aid Christians in the spiritual life," (Bishop Hobart,) or whether it refers to the gifts of the Holy Spirit which were manifested in some visible or outward mode. If it refer to the former, it is a legitimate proof-text to be used in defence of this rite; if to the latter, then it proves nothing to the purpose, unless it be maintained that the Holy Spirit is always miraculously imparted to those who receive "confirmation" from the hand of the bishop. That the imposition of the hands referred to *was* accompanied with an imparting of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous or public manner, is evident from the narrative. (*a*) It is that which the language used would naturally express. Thus, it is said, "As yet *he was fallen* upon none of them,"—language which naturally suggests the remarkable occurrences on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended in a public and visible manner, conferring the miraculous endowment of being able to speak foreign languages. It is not such language as would properly denote the ordinary influences of the Spirit in converting the soul, or that

"ordinary grace which is necessary to enlighten and aid Christians in the spiritual life." (*b*) That it was accompanied with some remarkable power or outward manifestation—something of the nature of miracle, either enabling them to work miracles or to speak with new tongues—is manifest from the effect which it had on Simon Magus, who witnessed it: "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands he may receive the Holy Ghost." Verses 18, 19. Now, it is evident that there *must* have been some visible manifestation, some outward power, which Simon supposed would be of value to him in carrying on a system of fraud and deception—something which he would be willing to "purchase" if possible, as constituting a valuable capital in exerting an influence over men. Whatever this was, it must have been something besides the "ordinary grace which is necessary to enlighten and aid Christians in the spiritual life." It must have been more than is conferred now in the rite of confirmation; for what power or influence is conferred now by the "apostolical bishop" in this rite which a man who wished to exert an influence over his fellow-men would desire to purchase? What would excite greater wonder than for a man with the spirit and design of Simon Magus—wishing to obtain some powerful

agency not possessed by others for the purpose of fraud and imposture—to approach a prelate after he had administered this rite to a company of disciples "properly instructed," and deliberately propose to *purchase* this remarkable power? Would such a prelate understand precisely what it was that he desired to *purchase?* It need only be added, on this passage, that whatever was conferred on the disciples of Samaria, from any thing that appears in the narrative, was conferred on them all. There is no reason whatever to suppose, as Bishop Hobart does, (p. 6,) that these remarkable endowments were conferred on one part, and that on the other the ordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit only were bestowed. Of any such distinction, the sacred writer has not thought proper to give us any information; and that there was such a distinction should not be assumed in an argument to defend the scriptural authority of this rite.

The only other case appealed to in defence of this rite is in Acts xix. 1–7, where the narrative is equally clear and decisive. It is that of the disciples at Ephesus. When Paul came there, he asked them whether they had received the Holy Ghost? They replied, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." They had been baptized, they said, "unto John's baptism;" and after now being baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus," it is added, "and when Paul

had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; *and they spake with tongues and prophesied.*" Here it is expressly affirmed that the miraculous endowment of speaking foreign languages was conferred on them, and evidently on them all, for there is no distinction made among them. There is no intimation whatever that it was a rite designed merely to confirm them in "the ordinary grace which is necessary to enlighten and aid Christians in the spiritual life," or that it was to be continued as an ordinance in the church. So far as these cases go, they demonstrate merely the fact that the Holy Ghost, in his miraculous influences, was conferred by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, *and by them only.*

These are the only cases in the New Testament, the only *facts* appealed to, to show that the "rite of confirmation" is scriptural in its character and authority, and is to be continued in the church. There is no intimation whatever that it was a mere rite of religion for establishing Christians in the belief of the truth, or for admitting members to the communion, or that there would be any special efficacy or benefit in the imposition of the hands of the "successors" of the apostles.

Now, it is a matter of simple justice to demand that, if these cases are appealed to, it *should be just as they occurred.* It should be to prove, that by the "laying on of the hands" of the "bishops,"

there will be imparted some remarkable gift of the Holy Ghost which can properly be spoken of as "*falling upon*" those who receive it, and which is so visible and manifest, that a bad man might deem it desirable to "purchase" it, if he could, in order to exert an influence over his fellow-men; and that there is, *in fact*, imparted, in each case, the "gift of tongues" and the power of "prophesying." These texts would be entirely pertinent and unanswerable to prove those points; but how do they prove another and quite a foreign thing—a thing that has no resemblance to this—that the "bishop" has the right of laying on his hands to impart the "*ordinary* grace which is necessary to enlighten and aid Christians in the spiritual life"? They prove one thing only—that in certain cases the laying on of the *apostles'* hands was accompanied with the miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost. Is this conferred by the laying on of the *bishop's* hands? If so, the passages, as proof-texts, are in point; if not, why are they adduced? Whatever may be the force of *other* arguments in favour of the rite of confirmation, it is respectfully insisted on that *these* texts—referring to the only *facts* on the subject in the New Testament—prove nothing.

(2.) There is no evidence that the passage so often appealed to by Episcopalians in support of confirmation in Heb. vi. 1, 2, has any reference to that rite as now practised, or that it furnishes any

authority for it: "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, *and of laying on of hands*, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." This passage is often referred to, as the quotations already made are, as if it were indisputable that it *must* refer to that rite of religion, and as if it needed no further proof than a mere reference to it in order to remove all doubts on the subject. But a few considerations will show that it cannot with propriety be adduced as a proof-text to demonstrate that the rite of confirmation is to be of perpetual observance in the church. First, the laying on of hands was practised among the Hebrews, and by the apostles themselves, on a great variety of occasions, and with no *exclusive* reference to the rite of confirmation. It occurred in the following cases: when a blessing was imparted to any one, (Gen. xlviii. 14, 18;) when prayer was offered for one; and when sacrifice was offered, accompanied with the confession of sin. In the latter case, the hands were laid on the head of the victim, and confession was made that he who had sinned deserved punishment. Lev. xvi. 21; xxiv. 14; Num. viii. 12. It was also done on solemn consecration to office, as in setting apart the high-priest to his office. In the New Testament, the

custom is referred to in the following cases:—(*a*) The Redeemer laid his hands on children to bless them, and on the sick when he healed them. Matt. xix. 13; Mark v. 23; Matt. ix. 18. (*b*) The apostles, in like manner, laid their hands on others in healing the sick. Acts xxviii. 8. (*c*) In ordination to office, 1 Tim. v. 22; Acts vi. 6; and (*d*) In imparting the Holy Spirit, in the cases already referred to. Acts viii. 17, 19; xix. 6. Now, in not *one* of these cases is the precise thing intended which is denoted by the laying on of the hands of a prelatical bishop in confirmation, as connected with the "ordinary grace which is necessary to enlighten and aid Christians in the spiritual life." That rite corresponds neither with the act of a *patriarch* in imparting a blessing to his children; nor to the offering of a sacrifice; nor to the consecration of a priest; nor to the act of Christ's blessing little children; nor to the healing of the sick; nor to an ordination to office; nor to the imparting of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner. It is *a new idea*, wholly unknown to any use of the phrase as employed in the New Testament. By what authority is this new idea attached to a scriptural phrase? and by what form of reasoning is it, then, urged that this rite is of divine appointment, and is to be observed in the churches as of divine obligation?

Further: if the phrase *had* been so used in the New Testament, and there were any instances in

which it could be shown that it was employed as it is now by Episcopalians, it is natural to ask, On what principles of interpretation it is held that this *must* be the manner in which it is used in Heb. vi. 2? The apostle is speaking of certain elementary truths or principles of the Christian religion. In the enumeration he speaks of the doctrine of "baptisms, and of the laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead." He refers to these things as important to be held in regard to the faith and the order of the Christian church. The doctrine of the laying on of hands is an important and elementary principle; a doctrine that is to be held. But why shall we infer that it *must* refer to "confirmation"? Why may it not refer to the laying on of hands in healing the sick, or in ordination, or in the bestowing of the miraculous endowments of the Holy Spirit? Were not these important and well-understood things, which it was desirable to maintain, and which were conceded to be so important that it was not necessary to dwell further upon them? Why, of all the cases in which the laying on of hands was used, is *this* selected as being indubitably what the apostle intended in the case?

Again, if it be supposed that the *order* in which these things are mentioned is such as to demand that it shall be understood of some rite of religion that immediately succeeded *baptism*, then I observe, that it should be held *just as it was*. The apostles

did lay their hands on young converts after they were baptized, and the Holy Ghost was imparted to them. Acts viii. xix. But it was the *miraculous power* of the Holy Ghost which was imparted; and the passage before us should be used only to demonstrate *that*. That fact was of sufficient importance for the apostle to mention it in this connection as one of the great things connected with the Christian religion—a thing so well understood then, that he did not think it important to dwell upon it.

It should be further added, that the Saviour appointed no such institution of his religion for perpetual observance in the church. He instituted baptism and the Lord's supper, and required them to be observed at all times; but there is no intimation that he designated any such rite as that of "confirmation" to be observed in his church. This consideration is important to show that he did not design that this should be a permanent ordinance of his religion. Since he so particularly specified baptism and the supper, it is inconceivable that he should have wholly omitted any reference to the rite of "confirmation," if he had intended that it should be observed permanently in the churches.

The sum of all that is said on this passage is, that *if* it is to be understood as referring to the imparting of the Holy Spirit by the imposition of hands after baptism, it should be employed *just as it was* —just in the sense in which it was then understood.

The only instances in which it was used in such a connection, were in imparting the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner. If Episcopal bishops claim this now as the true doctrine, if they mean to be understood as having the power of imparting the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner, *then*, and not otherwise, the text in Heb. vi. 2, is pertinent proof. But when they advance this claim, it will be easy to test its validity.

These are all the texts of Scripture which are relied on to demonstrate the scriptural authority of the rite of "confirmation." Whether they demonstrate this, may be left to the conclusion of any candid mind. Let it be remembered, that the Saviour appointed no such rite to be of perpetual observance in the church; that though he instructed his apostles to "lay hands on the sick," assuring them that they should "recover," (Mark xvi. 18,) he gave no instructions to them to "lay hands" on the newly-baptized to "confirm" them; and that in the *only* instances where the subject is referred to in the New Testament, it is with exclusive reference to the conferring of miraculous gifts, and it will be easily seen with what propriety the appeal is made to the New Testament, to show that to the "bishop" appertains the authority to administer the rite of "confirmation."

(3.) If the above be a fair interpretation of the only texts in the Scriptures which are relied on in

support of the rite of "confirmation," then it is obvious that there is great impropriety in appealing to them with a view to giving a scriptural sanction to this ceremony. It is among the means of giving a wholly unscriptural prominency and importance to the office of a "prelate," and of preserving the opinion that he is of a rank elevated above the inferior clergy. The use of those texts, and the habit of appealing to them as authority, has the tendency, if it is not designed to do it, to leave the impression, that the "bishop" has the power, in some mysterious way, and in a manner which no one of the "inferior clergy" has, and which the ministers of no other denomination are invested with, of imparting the Holy Ghost. It is true, we may be told, that there is no such claim as that the miraculous influences of the Holy Ghost are imparted; or that the only meaning is, that this is a method by which the "ordinary influences of the Holy Spirit adapted to enlighten and edify Christians are conferred;" or that it is a mere ceremony or mode by which the candidate himself "confirms" his purpose to be the Lord's; but there will be at the same time an appeal to Scripture in support of it, and *only* to texts which speak of the conferring of extraordinary endowments. If these texts relate to the matter, and are, as they are adduced to be, proof-texts in support of the rite, then they carry along also the impression that there *must* be still some unusual influ-

ences of the Holy Spirit conveyed through the hands of the bishop. Such an effect is unavoidable on the mass of minds; and it may be doubted whether the prelate himself would be solicitous to avoid it. He will be regarded as a man invested with functions which appertain to no other man. He has a power of conferring that which no other man can confer. He stands between God and man, to be the medium of conveying important influences which are intrusted to no other mortal. There will be supposed to be influences of a valuable kind to be obtained only by the laying on of his hands, and to attempt to impart which would be an act of the highest presumption in any one of the inferior clergy.

It cannot be doubted, therefore, that the right of confirmation is one of the arrangements adapted to give an unscriptural pre-eminence to the office of the Episcopal bishop. It is fitted to keep up the impression of a superior sanctity in the man who holds this office, and to exalt the episcopate over the body of the inferior clergy. Associate with an office the idea that there are peculiar endowments to be obtained *only* through that, and especially the idea that the Holy Spirit, even in "the ordinary influences necessary to enlighten and aid Christians in the spiritual life," is conveyed in this way, and there is a degree of sanctity attached to the office in the public estimation which can be secured by the possession of no personal moral worth, and which

will soon be felt to be an equivalent for the want of moral worth. The *office* becomes sacred, no matter what the *man* is; the ministrations of that office convey rich blessings to the soul, though the incumbent may himself be wholly destitute of the graces of the Holy Spirit. The tendency of the doctrine, therefore, is to give a pre-eminence to the office of the prelate; to sustain him in a usurpation over the "inferior clergy;" to keep up the idea that the Holy Ghost is conveyed to the soul by some action of the diocesan, and independently of any piety in him, or any personal religion on the part of the recipient; and, *therefore*, that they who are "confirmed" in this manner, and on whom the Holy Spirit has thus been conferred, can be in no danger in regard to their eternal salvation. It is a part of the system of the Papacy, and is essentially papal in its nature, and in its whole tendency on the individual and on the church of Christ.

Apart from the entire want of all scriptural authority in favour of the rite of "confirmation," there are other considerations which go to demonstrate that, as one of the methods of exalting the "bishop" and of supporting prelacy, it is wholly a device of human origin. It is an institution adapted, and probably originally intended in the progress of corruption in the church, to humble the pastor and exalt the prelate. It is a perpetual aggression on the respect which is due to the pastor of a church, the

man who, under God, is instrumental in the conversion of those who are to be "confirmed." If the "rite" is to be administered at all, every consideration of propriety and of justice demands that it should be done by the pastor himself. Those who are candidates for "confirmation" he has trained up under his care. He has instructed and guided them from childhood. If they are converted, he has been the means of their conversion. He has imparted to them the knowledge of salvation, and has been the instrument in qualifying them to become members of the church of Christ. In all this, there has been no supposition of his incompetency to do all, by the divine blessing, which was required to fit them for the kingdom of heaven. But now a time approaches in which *he* is to be superseded. He is to be set aside as disqualified for performing the duty of admitting them to the church, and the work is committed to the hands of a stranger—a prelatical bishop. The man who was deemed qualified to teach them from childhood, and to guide them, under the Great Shepherd, beside the living waters of salvation, and who is not disqualified to break unto them the bread of life—the man bound to them by the tender ties of the pastoral relation, and by all the associations and intimacies resulting from such a charge, is to be set aside, and is to give place—to whom? To a man in relation to whom none of these associations exist; a man whom they may

never have seen before, and whom they may never see again; a man with no possible *claim* to take any supervision over them, except the abstract claim of office; and a man who, when the rite is performed, is never to perform toward them any pastoral supervision whatever. Possibly, too—for such cases are not uncommon—he may be a man far inferior in moral worth, in spirituality of mind, in talent, age, eloquence, and learning, to the pastor himself; a man of vitally different views on the subject of spiritual Christianity from him; a man whose coming is barely *tolerated* by the pastor, and that only in virtue of his office.

But admitting that he has in all cases the highest degree of personal respectability; that there centres in him always all the excellencies which may endear the most venerable bishop to the religious community,—still it may be asked, what there is in the character and teaching and lives of the great mass of the Episcopal clergy and of other pastors which renders them incapacitated for so simple an office as that of invoking the blessing of God on those whom they have been instrumental in converting? Why should *such* men be held up to the community as disqualified to perform a function which, if appropriate at all, properly belongs to them? Why should it be announced that they are not qualified to admit their own members to their own churches in their own way? Why shall this work be re-

served to be performed by a stranger? Why shall the whole community be told periodically, that the regular pastor of a people is disqualified for laying his own hands on the youthful members of his charge, and imploring for them the divine blessing? Is this in accordance with the obvious spirit of the New Testament? And *is* it improper to ask here—would it be uncourteous to put it to the conscience and heart of the great body of the clergy in the Episcopal Church—how they can *bear* to be periodically displaced from their station over their flocks, and be required to yield to another the performance of a duty—if it be a duty—which properly belongs to them? If there be an advantage in this arrangement to them, it must consist in its tendency to produce *great humiliation of mind*, and in keeping before their eyes, and the eyes of their people, for the purpose of preventing the growth of spiritual pride, the idea that they are only of "the second or *inferior* order" even in their own churches.

To the rite of "confirmation" as a mere mode of admission to a church, or as a method of making a profession of religion, there can be no reasonable objections. Every denomination has a right to adopt such methods of signifying a purpose to make a profession of religion, not inconsistent with the principles of the Bible, as shall be deemed best adapted to edification. The method adopted in "confirmation" might be used by a Presbyterian, or

a Methodist, or a Baptist, without violating any of the principles which they entertain about the proper methods of admission to the church of Christ. With such a view, it may be left to be adopted or not, as a sense of propriety may lead them to determine. But when it is urged as a matter of scriptural authority; when it is claimed that it should be confined to a prelatical bishop; when texts are referred to which *can* have no reference to any thing like "confirmation" as now understood; when the effect of appealing to such texts is to keep up the idea of some superior sanctity in the "bishop," and of some mysterious power of imparting the Holy Ghost; and when the whole tendency is to debase and degrade the pastoral office—to displace the pastor and represent him as disqualified from performing a simple rite in relation to his own flock—to remove him to make way for a stranger,—*then* the whole subject assumes a different aspect. It makes an invasion on the constitution of the Christian church, and becomes a part of that great usurpation which, under the Roman hierarchy, asserted a domination of the prelate over the whole "inferior clergy," and of the priesthood over the whole world. Nothing can be more flimsy and futile than an attempt to show, from the New Testament, that a "bishop" has the exclusive authority for administering the rite of confirmation; and perhaps there is no device in the hierarchy better fitted to foster a sense of superiority in

"ministerial rank and dignity," and to nourish the worst feelings of ambition in the human heart, than the consciousness of possessing this power to displace the pastors from their office periodically from an extended circle of churches, and to make an annual journey where every step is a practical proclamation of their superior "rank," and where every church becomes a memento of this domination.

Sect. 3.—*The Claims of the Bishop to the Right of Supervision and Discipline.*

These points might be examined separately, but as the same principle applies to both, it will be more convenient to consider them in connection. The claim that the bishop has the right of supervision, and of administering discipline over the churches of a diocese, is one that is essential to Episcopacy. It is a claim which asserts not only that the general care of the churches within a given district devolves on the "bishop," but that neither the individual church nor the pastor of the church has the right to administer discipline on the members. It asserts that this power is placed in the hands of one man, who is comparatively a stranger, and who alone has the right of determining the amount of punishment that is to be inflicted on the offending members of a particular church. The authority which is urged for this mighty power is, that the apostles, in virtue of their office, thus in-

flicted discipline; and that to the prelate, as being a "successor" of the apostles, this power belongs, therefore, as a matter of course. I have examined the claim of the prelate to be regarded as the "successor" of the apostles, and here the argument *might* be left; for if prelates are in no proper sense the "successors" of the apostles, then it will follow that even if the apostles *did* exercise discipline, the bishops have no claim to the prerogatives of discipline in the churches. But, in order wholly to disprove this asserted right, I shall proceed to consider the question, whether the apostles themselves claimed the power of administering discipline, and were, therefore, superior to the presbyters. The inquiry will be pursued with reference to the question, whether they administered discipline in virtue of their office, and if they did, whether the administration of discipline was confined to them. If it was not, but was exercised either by the presbyters or the churches, then the claim of the "bishop" is invalid.

The argument, that the apostles inflicted discipline on the churches, is thus stated by Dr. Onderdonk, Tract, p. 12: "In 1 Cor. iv. 19–21; v. 3–5; 2 Cor. ii. 6; vii. 12; x. 8; xiii. 2, 10; and 1 Tim. i. 20, are recorded inflictions and remissions of discipline performed by an apostle, or threatenings on his part, although there must have been elders in Corinth, and certainly were in Ephesus."

The two cases referred to are those of Corinth and of Ephesus. They will be examined separately, as they are the *only* cases referred to in the New Testament. The purpose for which these cases are adduced by Episcopalians is, to show that the apostles were *superior to presbyters in power and rights*, and the alleged proof is, that *they administered discipline.* To bear on the case, therefore, the passages must prove not only that they exercised discipline, but (1) that they did it as apostles, or in virtue of their apostolic office; (2) that they did it in churches where there were presbyters; and (3) that neither the churches nor presbyters *ever* administered discipline themselves. Now in regard to these passages referred to for proof, the following general remarks may be made: (1.) There were certainly, in all, fourteen apostles; and if we may credit Episcopalians, and reckon Timothy, and Barnabas, and Silvanus, and Apollos, and Andronicus, and Junia, and Titus, and perhaps half a dozen others, there were somewhat more than a score invested with this office; yet it is remarkable that the only cases of discipline referred to, as going to prove the superiority of the whole college of apostles, are those in which the apostle Paul only was concerned. (2.) There are accounts in the New Testament of perhaps some hundreds of churches; and yet, we meet with no instance of the kind of discipline relied on, except in the single churches of

Corinth and Ephesus. It is incredible that there should have been no cases of discipline except in those churches. But if there were, the presumption is, that they were settled without the intervention of an apostle. (3.) These very cases, as will presently be shown, occurred in churches where Titus and Timothy were present,—both regarded by Episcopalians as "apostles" and "bishops,"—and thus were acts of manifest disrespect for the authority of those prelates. And if the fact that the discipline was administered where there were presbyters proves that the apostle Paul was superior to them, the same fact proves that he was superior likewise to Timothy and Titus. The course of the argument, then, from this would be, that Paul was disposed to assume the whole power into his own hands, and to set aside the claims alike of bishops and presbyters.

The two cases alleged as proof that the apostles *only* had the power of administering discipline are those at Corinth and Ephesus. Paul wrote fourteen epistles to eight churches. In all these epistles, and in all the numerous churches of which he had the charge, (2 Cor. xi. 28, "the care of *all* the churches,") these are the only instances in which he was called, so far as appears, to exercise discipline. We now inquire, Whether he did it for the purpose of showing that the apostles *only* had this power?

The first case alleged is that at Corinth. The *argument* in regard to this church is thus stated by Dr. Onderdonk, in his "Answer," pp. 103, 104: "There must have been elders in Corinth when the epistles were written to them. We prove this by the language of Paul: 'As a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation, and *another* buildeth thereon.' We prove it by the language, hyperbolical, indeed, in the number, but decisive of the fact: 'Though ye have ten thousand *instructors* in CHRIST.' We prove it by the language in reference to the right of the clergy to be maintained by their flocks: 'If *others* be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather?' We prove it by the fact that the 'Lord's supper' was celebrated in that church, which required an elder at least. We prove it by the language respecting some of the Corinthian teachers: 'Are they *ministers of* CHRIST . . . . I am more.'

"Yet without noticing these elders in the matter, so far as the epistles show, though they doubtless were noticed and consulted as much as courtesy and their pastoral standing made proper—without putting the matter into their hands, or even passing it through their hands, Paul threatens, inflicts, and remits *discipline* among the people of their charge. This is a 'ministerial' act; and Paul's doing it himself, instead of committing it to the elders, shows that he, an apostle, was superior to them in

ministerial powers and rights. The conclusion is unavoidable if the fact be sustained. Let us, then, look to the fact—our readers, we trust, will accompany us patiently.

"'But *I* will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in *power*. What will ye? Shall *I* come to you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?' 1 Cor. iv. 19–21.

"Here is 'power' and a 'rod' to be exercised under God's 'kingdom' or sovereignty, and by one man, an apostle, if those who were 'puffed up' did not humble themselves. Here is church discipline threatened, not by or through the elders, but by an apostle individually, and with the rod in *his* hands.

"'For *I* verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have *judged* (in the margin *determined*) already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and *my spirit*, with the power of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, to deliver such a one *unto Satan* for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.' 1 Cor. v. 3–5.

"Here is an act of church discipline nothing less than excommunication; and who inflicts it? The elders at Corinth? By no means. Paul does it.

The apostle 'judges' and determines to 'deliver to Satan' the unworthy Christian—and to do it when that church and 'his spirit' were assembled together, himself being in that sense present when his sentence was executed. Who read his sentence in the assembly we are not informed; probably one of the elders. Who ejected the man personally, if that mode of executing the sentence was added to the reading of it, we are not told. It is enough that the 'judgment,' the decision, the authority for the discipline, was that of an apostle alone, and evinced his superiority, in ministerial functions, to the elders of that church. The excommunication led, of course, to the exclusion of the man from the friendship and kind offices of the brethren; and this is called his 'punishment inflicted of many,' in the passage we are next to quote.

"'Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. To whom ye forgive any thing, *I* forgive also; for if *I* forgave any thing, to whom *I* forgave it, for your sakes *forgave I it in the person of* CHRIST.' 2 Cor. ii. 6, 10.

"Here is a remission of discipline, not by the elders, but by an apostle; *he* pronounces the punishment to be 'sufficient.' The brethren forgive the scandal of the man's conduct, he having become penitent; and Paul forgives him, by removing the sentence. They forgave as men and fellow-Christians—he forgave 'in the person of Christ.'

"With such illustrations of an apostle's power to threaten discipline, to inflict discipline, and to remit discipline, we shall understand the force of the other passages in the epistles to the Corinthians.

"'Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that *our care for you in the sight of God* might appear unto you.' 2 Cor. vii. 12. 'But though I should boast somewhat more of *our authority*, (which the Lord hath given *us* for edification, and not for your destruction,) I should not be ashamed.' 2 Cor. x. 8. 'I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present the second time; and being absent, now I write to them which *heretofore have sinned*, and to *all other*, that if I come again *I* will not spare. Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present *I* should use sharpness, according to the *power* which the Lord hath given *me* to edification, and not to destruction.' 2 Cor. xiii. 2, 10."

This is the *whole* of the argument from the case in the church at Corinth. This argument I proceed now to examine, and in reply would observe: That there were elders, teachers, ministers, instructors in Corinth, is placed beyond a question by the nature of the case. This fact I do not intend to call in question.

Further, if there were elders there, there was also, according to Episcopalians, an "apostle," a

prelatical bishop, there—to wit, Timothy. That Timothy was there at the time referred to, is shown by a quotation from the epistle itself, relating to this very time, and in immediate connection with the case of discipline. 1 Cor. iv. 17: "For this cause [that is, on account of your divided and contending state] have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church." Now, as it will not be pretended by Episcopalians that Timothy was not an "apostle" and a prelate, and as it is undeniable that he was at that time at Corinth, the argument will as well apply to set aside *his* right to administer discipline in the case, as that of the elders. Borrowing, then, the words of Dr. Onderdonk, I would say: "Yet without noticing" this apostle "in the matter, so far as the epistles show—though" he was "doubtless noticed and consulted, as much as courtesy and" his apostolical "standing made proper—without putting the matter into" his "hands, or even passing it through" his "hands—Paul threatens, inflicts, and remits *discipline*. This is a ministerial act. And Paul's doing it himself, instead of committing it to" Timothy, "shows that he, an apostle, was *superior* to" him "in ministerial power and rights." Now, no Episcopalian will fail to be at once deeply impressed with the fallacy of this

reasoning in regard to Timothy. And yet, it is manifestly just as pertinent and forcible in his case as it is in regard to the elders of Corinth. It cannot be pretended that a difference existed, because the "elders" were *permanently* located there, and Timothy not; for the argument relied on is, that the apostles were superior *as apostles*, and therefore it made no difference on this point whether they were at Corinth, or at Crete, or at Antioch; they were invested with the apostolic office everywhere. The conclusion which I derive from this instance, and from the fact which has now been stated, is, that there was some peculiarity in the case at Corinth, which rendered the ordinary exercise of discipline by presbyters difficult; which operated equally against any interference by Timothy; and which called particularly for the interposition of the founder of the church, and of an inspired apostle—of one clothed with authority to inflict a heavy judgment, here denominated "delivering unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh," (1 Cor. v. 5,)—a power which could be exercised by none then in Corinth. The next inquiry is, whether there are any reasons for this opinion? The following appear to be entirely satisfactory:—

(1.) Paul had established that church, (Acts xviii. 1–11,) and his interference in cases of discipline would be regarded as peculiarly proper. There would be a natural and obvious deference to the

founder of the church, which would render such an interposition in the highest degree appropriate. This view is confirmed by the fact that he puts his authority *in this very case* on the deference which was due to him as their spiritual father: "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many FATHERS; for in Christ Jesus *I* have begotten you through the gospel." 1 Cor. iv. 15.

(2.) The circumstances of the church at Corinth were such, evidently, as to render the ordinary exercise of discipline by their own elders, without counsel from abroad and the judgment of one who would be respected, impossible. They were rent into parties; were engaged in violent contention; and the authority, therefore, of one portion of the "teachers" and "instructors" would be disregarded by the other. Thus, no harmonious sentence could be agreed upon, and no judgment of a party could restore peace. An attempt to exercise discipline would only enkindle party animosity, and produce strife. See chap. i. 11–17. So great, evidently, was the contention, and so hopeless the task of allaying it by any ordinary means, that even *Timothy*, whom Paul had sent for the express purpose of bringing them into remembrance of his ways, (1 Cor. iv. 17,) could have no hope, by his own interference, of allaying it. It was natural, therefore, that it should be referred to the founder of the

church, and to one who had the power of punishing the offender.

(3.) It is material to remark, that this was not an ordinary case of discipline. It was one which required the severest exercise of authority, and in a form which was lodged only with those intrusted with the power of inflicting diseases, or, as it is termed, "of delivering to Satan for the destruction of the flesh." 1 Cor. v. 5. Such cases would inevitably devolve upon the apostles, as clothed with miraculous power; and such, beyond all controversy, was this instance. It therefore proves nothing about the *ordinary* mode of administering discipline. This offence had reached such a degree of enormity—it had been suffered to remain so long, and had become so aggravated—that it was necessary to interpose in this awful manner, and to decide it. Yet,

(4.) The apostle supposes that they *ought* to have exercised the usual discipline themselves. This is evident from a comparison of the following passages: 1 Cor. v. 9, 10, 11, 12, with v. 2. In these verses it is supposed that they did themselves usually exercise discipline. Paul (ver. 9) gave them the general direction not to keep company with fornicators; that is, to exercise discipline on those who did. In ver. 11, he asks them—in a manner showing that the affirmative answer to the question expressed their usual practice—whether

they did not "judge those that were within?" that is, whether they did not ordinarily exercise discipline in the church? And in ver. 2, he supposes that it *ought* to have been done in this very case; and as it had *not* been done by them, and the affair had assumed special enormity, he exercised the miraculous power intrusted to him, by inflicting on the offender a grievous disease. Ver. 4, 5; comp. 1 Cor. xi. 30.

(5.) This case of discipline in the church was, after all, *in fact*, administered by the church itself, and not by the apostle Paul. This is conclusive from verses 3–5: "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed; in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *when ye are gathered together*, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan." They were to be assembled for the purpose of administering discipline, and the act was in reality to be administered *by the church*. The apostle did not assume the authority to do it independently of the church, or without their concurrence; and though the offence was so great and glaring that there was no doubt as to the propriety and the necessity of administering the discipline, yet even Paul would not do it, though in a church founded by himself, in a way which would invade their own proper prerogatives. It is to be remem-

bered, too, that this was a case where bodily pains were to be inflicted by miraculous agency, for the offender was to be delivered "unto Satan *for the destruction of the flesh;*" and that even in *this* case the apostle would not visit a member of the church with this punishment without the concurrence of the church itself. Even Paul, an apostle, and the spiritual father of the church, did not claim the authority to remove an offender except *through their agency*. The church was to take up the case, to act on it, to pass the sentence, to excommunicate the man. And again, when the sentence was to be remitted, and the offender was to be restored, it was to be by the church itself. Even an apostle did not assume the prerogative of saying that the offender *should* be reinstated in the church; he did not by his own authority restore him to his former good standing: he placed himself before the church as a pleader, and asked *them* to do it: "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many, [not of one, as the apostle, but by the collective church.] So that contrariwise YE OUGHT rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I BESEECH you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things." 2 Cor. iii. 6–9. Here the *church* is consulted at

every step, and without its action nothing is done. In judging in the case, in excluding the member, and again in admitting him to the communion, the church acts throughout. The apostle does nothing himself. I would respectfully ask whether this is the method of administering discipline by those who claim to be the "successors" of the apostles in the "Protestant Episcopal Church"? When discipline is to be administered, is it the practice for the "bishop" to make a representation of it to the "church" in which the offence was committed, and to ask, or even to *enjoin*, the church to "gather together with his spirit," and to deliver the offender to the just measure of punishment? And again, when he judges that the "punishment inflicted of many" is "sufficient," does he present himself at the door of the assembled church, and "BESEECH" them to receive the offending member again? I apprehend that in this respect there has been an entire departure from the "apostolic" rule and example. The matter of fact is, that in all instances of discipline in the Episcopal Church, the bishop is the ultimate arbiter, and if a case is brought before him, he has the sole right of decision, and neither church nor pastor, nor both, can set his verdict aside.

(6.) It is evident that other churches did, in ordinary cases, exercise discipline without the intervention of an apostle. Thus, the church in

Thessalonica—where Episcopacy, with all its zeal, has never been able even to *conjecture* that there was a diocesan bishop—was directed to exercise discipline in any instance where the command of the inspired apostle was not obeyed: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." 2 Thess. iii. 14.

(7.) The circumstances of the early churches were such as to make the apostolic intervention proper, and even indispensable, without supposing that it was to be a permanent arrangement. These churches were ignorant and feeble. They had had little opportunity of learning the nature of Christianity. In most cases, their founders were with them but a few weeks, and then left them under the care of elders ordained from among themselves. (Comp. Acts xiii. xiv., *et passim.*) Those elders would be poorly qualified to discharge the functions of their office, for they would be but little elevated, in character and learning, above the mass of the people. The churches must have been imperfectly organized, unaccustomed to rigid discipline, exposed to many temptations, easily drawn into sin, and subject to great agitation and excitement. Even many subjects in morals and religion, which may now be considered as settled, would appear to them open for debate, and parties, as at Corinth, would easily be formed. Comp. Acts xiv. xv.;

Rom. xiv.; 1 Cor. viii. In these circumstances, how natural was it for these churches to look for direction to the inspired men who had founded them; and how natural that such persons should interpose and settle important and difficult cases of discipline. In view of these obvious considerations, are we to suppose that the fact that the apostle Paul in *two* cases—and two such cases only are recorded—directed an extraordinary act of discipline, is to be regarded as proof that this power appertained *only* to the apostolic office, and was to be a permanent arrangement in the church? It is rather a matter of wonder that *but* two cases of apostolic interference are mentioned during the long and active life of Paul; and this is evidence of great weight that the churches were expected to exercise discipline, and actually did so, on their own members.

These views are confirmed by what is known to take place in organizing churches in heathen countries at the present day. In a conversation with me, the Rev. Mr. Winslow, one of the American missionaries then stationed at Ceylon, incidentally remarked that the missionaries were obliged to retain the exercise of discipline in their own hands; and that, although the mission had been established more than fifteen years, yet it had never been intrusted to the native converts. He further observed that the missionaries had been endeavouring to find persons to whom they could intrust the discipline

of the church, as elders, but that as yet they had not found one. The native converts were still so ignorant of the laws of Christianity, they had so little influence in the church, they were so partial to each other, even when in fault, that thus far discipline—though somewhat frequent acts were necessary—was retained in the hands of the missionaries. Substantially the same thing must have occurred in the early churches in Asia Minor, in Syria, and Greece. Will Episcopalians infer that, because modern missionaries have found it necessary to retain the power of administering discipline in their own hands, therefore they are diocesan bishops, and that they do not contemplate that the churches under their care shall be other than prelatical? If not, the argument in the case of the church in Corinth should be allowed to have no weight.

I have now done with *this* instance of discipline. I have shown that all the circumstances of the case can be accounted for without any such conclusion as that to which Episcopalians are desirous of conducting it. I turn, therefore, to the other case of discipline referred to—that in the church at Ephesus.

The case is thus stated in 1 Tim. i. 20: "Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom *I* have delivered *unto Satan*, that they may learn not to blaspheme." The argument of Episcopalians is stated by Dr. Onderdonk in the following words:—

"There 'certainly were' elders in Ephesus when

Paul wrote the first epistle to Timothy. We prove this fact from the language: 'That thou mightest charge some that they *teach* no other doctrine.' Teachers, then, there were in that church, public teachers, authorized teachers, and such are not the ruling elders or deacons of parity, nor (except under the bishop's license) the deacons of Episcopacy; therefore both these parties, the only ones concerned with the Tract, must agree that they 'certainly' were elders or presbyters. We prove it by the apostle's condemnation of Hymeneus and Alexander, for 'making shipwreck concerning faith,' *i. e.* making shipwreck in teaching the faith, teaching it publicly and with authority; and these teachers were elders, for the reasons just given. We prove it also from the fact that there were elders at Ephesus when Paul said to them, in Acts xx.: 'Grievous wolves *shall* entêr in among *you*, also of your *own* selves *shall* men arise, speaking perverse things;' Paul thus declaring that the false teaching at Ephesus would be by elders, and would occur afterward, it not having occurred as yet. That the false teaching would be by elders, seems decisive in favour of the assertion that the false teaching there *was* by elders, as we have just maintained; that the false teaching was *yet* to occur, when there were already elders in Ephesus addressed by Paul, in Acts xx., is proof that that church had its elders when this evil indoctrination *had* occurred, which

was the case when Paul first wrote to Timothy, as our extracts from that epistle show. This latter argument we consider final: the epistle enumerates, as errors then existing there, 'fables, endless genealogies, swerving from charity and faith to vain jangling, questions and strifes of words, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called;' γνωσεως, perhaps gnosticism, as Hammond argues. This was the state of things at Ephesus when Paul wrote the epistle. But when he addressed the 'elders,' in Acts xx., he spoke of nothing of the sort as having existed, or as existing then, but only as to exist at a *future* time. If, then, there were elders there *before* these mischiefs appeared, there 'certainly were' when they were *afterward* developed—*i. e.* when Paul wrote the first epistle to Timothy.

"Well, then, is the *discipline* of the church at Ephesus intrusted to these elders? Nothing like it. As in the case of the Corinthians, that 'power was given by the LORD' to an apostle, and only an apostle exercised it. It is the apostle who inflicts the discipline; the elders do not appear in the matter. And discipline is a ministerial function, and excommunication its highest exercise." (Answer, p. 13.)

In reply to this argument, I make the following observations:—

(1.) It occurs in a charge to Timothy—that

Timothy, who, on the supposition of Episcopalians, was an apostle co-ordinate with Paul himself; Timothy, the *prelate* of Ephesus. If Timothy was an apostle, and a diocesan bishop, and if the exercise of discipline pertained to an apostle and bishop, why did Paul take the matter into his own hands? Why did he not refer it to Timothy, and repose sufficient confidence in him to believe that he was competent to fulfil this part of his episcopal office? Would it now be regarded as courteous for the "bishop" of the diocese of Ohio to interpose and inflict an act of discipline on some Hymeneus or Alexander of the diocese of Pennsylvania? And would there be as cordial submission of the bishop of the diocese of Pennsylvania as there was of the bishop of the diocese of Ephesus? If Timothy was at Ephesus, and if the case of discipline occurred at the time which Dr. Onderdonk supposes, this case appears very much as if Paul regarded Timothy as neither an apostle nor a prelate.

(2.) If the exercise of the authority in this case of discipline by Paul proves that the presbyters at Ephesus had no right to administer discipline, for the same reason it proves that Timothy had not that right. By the supposition of Episcopalians, Timothy was there, as well as the presbyters. The assumption of the authority by Paul as much proves that it did not belong to Timothy as that it did not belong to the presbyters.

(3.) This was a case similar to that which occurred at Corinth. It was an act of discipline which supposed the infliction of the judgment of God by a miraculous agency: "Whom I have delivered *unto Satan*, that they may learn not to blaspheme." Compare this account with the record of the case in Corinth, (1 Cor. v. 5,) and it is evident that this was not an ordinary act of discipline, but was such as implied the direct infliction of punishment by the Almighty. That such inflictions were intrusted to the hands of the apostles, I admit; and that Paul, not Timothy, inflicted this, proves that the latter was neither an apostle nor a prelate.

(4.) It is supposed by Episcopalians that this occurred at Ephesus, and while Timothy was there. But what evidence is there of this? It is neither affirmed that the transaction was at Ephesus, nor that Timothy was present. The argument of Episcopalians proceeds on the assumption that Timothy was bishop there when the epistle was written, and that the case of discipline occurred there. The only possible pretence of *proof* of this would be the subscription at the end of the *second* epistle. But that subscription has no authority whatever; and it is not to be *assumed*, but *proved*, that Timothy was there in the capacity of a prelate, or there at all, when this epistle was written to him. The demonstration, that a bishop only exercised discipline, it

must be admitted, rests on slender grounds, if this be all.

(5.) But if this case did occur at Ephesus, what evidence is there that it occurred at the *time* that Episcopalians suppose? The account in the Epistle to Timothy by no means fixes the time of the transaction. "Whom I *have* delivered (παρέδωκα) unto Satan." It was already done; and the presumption is, that it was done when Paul was himself present with them. It is morally certain that it was *not* an act of discipline *then to be performed.*

My readers have now the whole case before them. Episcopacy affirms that prelates *only* have the power of administering discipline. It affirms that the churches are prohibited from exercising it on their own members; that those appointed to preach the gospel, to administer the sacraments, and to be pastors of the flock,—and who may therefore be supposed to understand the cases of discipline and best qualified to administer it,—have no right to exercise this act of government over their own members, but that this exclusive prerogative belongs to a stranger, and a foreigner—a prelatical bishop—whom the churches seldom see, and who must be, in a great degree, unacquainted with their peculiar wants and character. All power of discipline in an entire diocese of some hundreds of churches is to be taken away from the churches themselves, and from the pastors, and committed to a solitary, independent

man, who, from the nature of the circumstances, can have little acquaintance with the case, and possess few of the qualifications requisite for the intelligent performance of this duty. And does the reader ask, What is the authority for this assumption of power? Why are the churches and their pastors disrobed of this office, and reduced to the condition of humble dependants at the feet of the prelate? Let him, in astonishment, learn. It is not because there is any *command* to this effect in the New Testament; it is not because there is any declaration implying that it *would* be so; it is not by any affirmation that it ever *was* so. This is the reason, and this is all:—The apostle Paul, in two cases, and in both instances over the heads of presbyters, (and over the head of "Bishop" Timothy, too,) delivered men "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that they might learn not to blaspheme;" and THEREFORE, Episcopal bishops *only* have power to administer discipline in the Christian church; and THEREFORE, all the acts of discipline exercised by Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and Congregationalists are null and void. The disposal of *such* antecedents and consequents may be safely left to all who hold that "no argument is worth taking into the account that has not a *clear* and *palpable* bearing on the naked topic—the scriptural evidence of Episcopacy." Tract, p. 3.

But I have not done with this subject. I shall

yet show, (ch. iv. § 2, 2,) not only, that there is no evidence that the apostles exclusively exercised discipline, but that there *is* positive proof that all the acts of discipline were *in fact* exercised by the presbyters and the churches.

I have now examined the essential point in Episcopacy; for, if the claims which are arrogated for prelatical bishops are unfounded, the system, as a system, is destroyed. I have examined the solitary passage urged directly in its favour, "the apostles *and* elders," "the apostles, *and* elders, *and* brethren;" and the claims set up in favour of their exclusive right to administer discipline and to administer the rite of confirmation. I have shown, if I mistake not, that none of the passages of the New Testament relied on furnish support for the stupendous claims set up in favour of the prelate. If they do not, then, by the uniform admission of Episcopalians, and by the special concession of Dr. Onderdonk, there *is* no authority for Episcopacy in the Scriptures, and it must be regarded as wholly an arrangement of human origin. "If we cannot," says Dr. Onderdonk, (Tract, p. 11,) "authenticate the claims *of the episcopal office*," [the office of the prelate,] "we will surrender those of our deacons, and let all power *be confined to the one office of presbyters*." It is submitted to the reader whether we are not now prepared to avail ourselves of this concession, and to draw the conclusion that "the claims

of the episcopal office" are *not* made out, and that the ministers of the gospel should be regarded as equal in grade and honour. If so, the controversy should be considered as at an end.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH AS ESTABLISHED BY THE SAVIOUR AND THE APOSTLES.

HAVING thus examined all the scriptural arguments which are adduced by Episcopalians in favour of the peculiar organization of their church, the argument might be left here, for, if the positions which have been taken are correct, the principal object contemplated is accomplished. If there is no scriptural authority for prelacy; none for an apostolical succession; none for confirmation; none for the right which the "bishop" claims for administering discipline,—then it follows that there is nothing in the system which makes it binding on the churches of the Redeemer, and that the whole arrangement of the Episcopacy is one of human origin.

But it is often objected by Episcopalians, that all the efforts of those who doubt the claims of the "Episcopate" are employed to demolish that system without proposing any substitute in its place; and that, while so much zeal is evinced to prove that

their claims are not founded on the authority of Scripture, nothing is done to show what *was* the plan on which the church in the New Testament was organized. It is proposed, therefore, to collect and arrange the scattered notices on this point in the New Testament, and to inquire whether it was the design of the Saviour to prescribe any form of church government which should be universally binding on his church. The first point will relate to the officers referred to in the New Testament; the second, to the actual organization and government of the churches.

SECT. 1.—*The Officers of the Church.*

The officers referred to in the New Testament, in the organization of the church, may be divided into two great classes. 1. Those which were intended to be temporary; and, 2. Those which are so mentioned as to show that they were designed to be permanent.

I. Those which were designed to be temporary.

Under this class are to be ranked,

(1.) The apostles, properly so called, who were appointed by the Saviour to be his companions, to be WITNESSES of what he taught, and to be WITNESSES of his resurrection. This has been demonstrated in ch. ii. This office, from its nature, was temporary, and was confined to those who had been

with him during his public ministry, and whom he had specially called for this purpose, with Matthias, who was chosen to fill the vacated place of Judas, (Acts i.,) and Paul, who was called to the *special* work of the apostleship among the Gentiles, and permitted to see the Saviour in a miraculous manner after his ascension, *in order* that he might have the appropriate qualification of an apostle. 1 Cor. ix. This office was one in which, from the nature of the case, there *could* be no succession, unless the "succession" was kept up by a miraculous manifestation of the Saviour to each one in the "succession," as in the case of the apostle Paul, to qualify him to be a "witness" that the Redeemer was risen from the dead. In reference to this point, I may briefly sum up all that has been shown to be contained in the New Testament. The case stands thus: (*a.*) There is no *command* in the New Testament to the apostles to transmit to others the peculiarity of the apostolic office. If the peculiarity of the office was to be transmitted, it was required that such a command should be given. But it has not been pretended that any such command has been discovered. (*b.*) There is no affirmation that it *would be* thus transmitted. No one has been able to find an affirmative on that point. And we may ask here whether it is credible that the apostles were bishops of a superior order, and that it was designed that all the church should be subject to an order of

men "superior in ministerial rank and power," deriving their authority from the apostles, and yet not the slightest *command* thus to transmit it, and not the slightest hint that it *would be* done? (*c*) It was *impossible* that the peculiarity of the apostolic office *should* be transmitted. I have shown, not by assumptions, but by a large array of passages of Scripture, what that peculiarity was: to bear witness to the great events which went to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, and that he rose from the dead. The peculiarity of that office, as specified by Jesus Christ, by the chosen apostles, by Paul, and by the whole college, COULD NOT be transmitted; for no prelate is, or can be, a *witness*, in the sense and for the purpose for which they were originally designated, unless he can make the affirmation which Paul did in proof that *he* was an apostle: "Am I not an apostle? *Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?* 1 Cor. ix. 1. (*d*) I have examined the case of Timothy, of Titus, of Barnabas, and of the "angels" of the churches—the slender basis on which, in the absence of direct *command* to continue the succession, and direct *affirmation* that it would be continued, the whole fabric of Episcopacy has been reared.

The conclusion to which we have come is, that, while this was a most important and wise arrangement in the organization of the church, there is not the slightest evidence that the Redeemer *intended* that it should be perpetual; that it is impossible to

make out *the fact* of such a "succession;" and consequently that the whole claim that the "bishop" is the "successor" of the apostles is a usurpation of authority in the church. The organization of the Christian church is complete without any such "succession"—or such officers—as really as it is without the "order" of "deaconesses," and without the "order" of the "seventy disciples."

(2.) There were special ministers sent out for a temporary purpose by the Lord Jesus himself: "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come." Luke x. 1. These persons were (*a*) evidently appointed for a different purpose from the apostles. The apostles, as has been shown, were to be with him, to hear his instructions, to be witnesses of his miracles, his sufferings, his death, and his resurrection, and *then* to go and proclaim those things to the world; and, having done this, the apostolic office was to cease. The object of the appointment of the "seventy" is expressed, and we have no right to go beyond that in interpreting their commission. They were to "go two and two into every city and place, *whither he himself would come.*" This was the extent of their commission. It was to proclaim the coming of Jesus of Nazareth, and prepare the way for his personal preaching there, evidently by calling the minds of the people to his claims,

to the remarkable character of his preaching, to his power in working miracles, and to the evidence that he was the Messiah. There is no commission to go *out* of Judea, as the Saviour evidently did not design himself to go out of Judea; and there is no commission to the appointment as a permanent office. (*b*) They were appointed to a *temporary* office. This appears from the nature of the commission, and from the fact that there is no reference in the New Testament to any persons who claimed to be the "successors" of the "seventy." There is no record of their number having been filled up when one of them died, nor is there any intimation whatever of the permanency of their office. We never hear them alluded to as having a fixed office in the church; nor in the appointment of any class of ministers is there any intimation that they were to succeed the "seventy" disciples. In the accounts of the churches which were organized by the apostles there is no allusion to them, nor does it appear to have ever occurred that any reference was to be had to them in the organization of a church.

If this be so,—and that it is, no one acquainted with the New Testament will deny,—then the appointment of the "seventy disciples" should not be urged as an argument to prove that the ministry was established in "three orders of bishops, *priests*, and deacons." Between the appointment of the seventy, as the record is made in Luke, and the office of a

"*priest*" in the Episcopal Church, there is no resemblance whatever. There is no evidence, as has been remarked, that it was to be permanent; there is no intimation that they were to be subject to the "bishops"—the apostles; or that they might *not* ordain, or might *not* administer the rite of confirmation, or that they might *not* administer discipline, or that they might *not* take the oversight of a "diocese." All this is language unknown to the New Testament; and the simple and obvious account of the appointment of the "seventy" is, that they were employed by the Saviour to prepare the way for his personal ministry in the places where he proposed to go.

(3.) There were in the apostolic church, also, "*prophets*," who, unless they were classed under the denomination of "teachers," were designed only to be temporary in the duration of their office. Acts xiii. 1: "There were in the church at Antioch certain *prophets* and teachers;" xv. 32: "And Judas and Silas being *prophets* also themselves." 1 Cor. xii. 28: "God hath set some in the church—secondarily—*prophets*." Ver. 29: "Are all *prophets?*" Eph. iv. 11: "And he gave some *prophets*." 1 Cor. xiv. 3: "He that *prophesieth* speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." Ver. 5: "I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye *prophesied;* for greater is he that *prophesieth* than he that speaketh with tongues." Ver. 22: "Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe,

but to them that believe not; but *prophecy* serveth not for them that believe not, but for them that believe." Ver. 29: "Let the *prophets* speak two or three, and let the others judge." There is some evidence that the persons here referred to were under the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and that they were therefore appointed in an extraordinary manner in the circumstances in which the church was placed when newly founded, and when it needed special guidance and direction. There is no evidence whatever that the office of "prophet" was intended to be permanent.

(4.) Under this denomination of officers that were not designed to be permanent, may be ranked also the office of *deaconess*. Rom. xvi. 1: "I commend unto you Phebe, our sister, which is a *servant*—διάκονον—of the church which is at Cenchrea." Comp. 1 Tim. v. 3, 9–11; Titus ii. 3, 4. Deaconesses appear to have been commonly aged widows, sustaining a fair reputation, and qualified to guide and instruct those who were young and inexperienced. The "apostolical constitutions" say: "Ordain a deaconess who is faithful and holy, for the ministries toward the women." Book iii. Pliny, in his celebrated letter to Trajan, says, when speaking of the efforts which he made to obtain information respecting the opinions and practices of Christians: "I deemed it necessary to put two maid-servants, who are called *ministræ*, [*deaconesses*,] to the tor-

ture, in order to ascertain what is truth." The reason for their appointment in the early churches of the Gentiles was probably the fact, that in the East, females are kept secluded from men, and are not permitted to mingle freely in society, as is the case in the Western nations. It became necessary, therefore, to appoint aged and experienced females to instruct the young of their sex, to visit the sick, and to distribute to them the alms of the church. From the nature of the case, however, the necessity of this office would not exist in those countries where these customs did not prevail; and there is no reason to suppose that it was designed to be permanent in the church.*

II. Permanent officers mentioned in the organization of the church in the New Testament. These officers are:

(1.) Those designated by various terms, denoting that they were set apart or appointed to preach the gospel, to impart instruction, and to take the over-

* It may be a question, however, whether it would not be well to *revive* this order in the church. There is a large class of females in most churches, especially in cities, who cannot, in any proper sense and to any suitable degree, be under the supervision of a pastor. They are those who have had little early training in religion, who are not connected with pious families, many of whom are employed as domestics, and who peculiarly need instruction in the doctrines and duties of religion. Some of them are too old to be in Sabbath-schools, and many of them could not be well collected in Bible classes; but they could with great propriety be placed under the care of more aged and experienced females in the church, whose special duty it should be to visit them, to counsel them, to instruct them, and to aid them in the divine life.

sight of the flock. This class of persons is mentioned under different appellations—as preachers, bishops, pastors, teachers, evangelists; but all of them in such a connection and form, that it is evident that the arrangement was intended to be permanent.

(*a*) The office of *preacher* was designed to be permanent, for the Saviour gave direction to his apostles to "go into all the world and *preach* the gospel to every creature," assuring them that he would be "with them alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Comp. Rom. x. 14, 15; 2 Tim. iv. 2. That the office was designed to be permanent, is made certain from the instruction which Paul gives to Timothy: "And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." 2 Tim. ii. 2.

(*b*) The office of *bishop*, or overseer of the flock, in the true scriptural sense—as a pastor of a particular church—was designed to be permanent also. "The *name* 'bishop,' which now designates the highest grade in the ministry," says Dr. Onderdonk, (Tract, p. 12,) "is not appropriated to that office in Scripture. That name is given to the middle office or presbyters; *and* ALL *that we read in the New Testament concerning 'bishops' is to be regarded as appertaining to that middle grade.* It was after the apostolic age that the name 'bishop' was taken from the second order and appropriated to the first." The

office of "bishop," as it was used in the "apostolic age,"—denoting an "overseer,"—is designed to be permanent in the church. This is evident from the fact that instructions were given which implied this: "If a man desireth the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop, then, must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine." 1 Tim. iii. 1–7; Titus i. 7–9; Acts xx. 28; Phil. i. 1. The appointment of *bishops* in the churches by the apostles, and the instructions to Timothy in regard to their qualifications, prove that it was understood that the arrangement was to be permanent. No such instructions are given in regard to the qualifications of "apostles," or of prelates, as the "*successors* of the apostles," or of those who were to succeed the "seventy disciples," or of those who were to succeed the "prophets." Those things were, therefore, of a temporary character; this was a fixed arrangement.

(*c*) The office of *pastor*—another name for the office of "bishop"—was designed to be permanent, for the same reason that instructions are given which imply this, and that the office is mentioned in such a connection as to show that this was designed: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, *pastors* and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body

of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man." Eph. iv. 11, 12. This passage proves that *some at least* of these offices were to be permanent in the church. That it was designed that the *pastoral* office should be one of them, is apparent from the fact that the word is applied to the office in such a way as to show that it was a permanent arrangement. The word "pastor," indeed, in the sense in which it is used in Eph. iv. 11, does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament, nor have our translators rendered the same word *pastor* elsewhere. It occurs often in the sense of *shepherd*, and is uniformly elsewhere so rendered. Matt. ix. 36; xxv. 32; xxvi. 31; Mark vi. 34; xiv. 27; Luke ii. 8, 15, 18, 20; John x. 2, 11, 12, 14, 16; Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 25. But the *verb* (ποιμαίνω) is so used as to denote that the office was to be of a permanent character. John xxi. 16: "He saith to him, Feed—ποίμαινε—my sheep." This was indeed addressed to Peter; but that *he* understood it as contemplating a permanent arrangement in the church, is apparent from his own instructions given to the elders of the church: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, *feed*—ποιμάνατε—the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof [*exercising the office of a bishop*—ἐπισκοποῦντες]—not by constraint, but willingly." 1 Pet. v. 1, 2. Comp. 1 Cor. ix. 7.

(*d*) The office of *teacher* was designed to be permanent. Eph. iv. 11: "He gave some *teachers*." "And God hath set some in the church—thirdly, *teachers*." 1 Cor. xii. 28; Gal. vi. 6: "Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that *teacheth* in all good things." Rom. xii. 7: "Or he that teacheth on teaching." Comp. Acts xiii. 1; 1 Cor. xii. 29; 2 Pet. ii. 1.

(*e*) The office of an evangelist, or of a publisher of the gospel, was designed to be permanent in the church. Eph. iv. 11: "He gave some *evangelists*." 2 Tim. iv. 5: "But watch thou in all things, do the work of an evangelist." Comp. Acts xxi. 8.

All these offices relate to the preaching of the gospel, and to the proper care and oversight of the church, and might evidently be united in the same person. There is no incompatibility in the offices themselves which would prevent this, and there is every reason to suppose that they were thus united. Nay, there is positive evidence that in the case of Timothy and of some of the apostles they were thus united. They are not incompatible now; and there is the same evidence that they were intended to be permanent that there is that the church itself was designed to be permanent.

(2.) There were *rulers*, or *ruling elders*, in the church, who are so mentioned as to make it probable that it was designed that there should be in every church such officers to direct and govern its affairs.

That the permanent officers already referred to were authorized to exercise government over the church, in addition to the duty of preaching, of pastoral supervision, and of teaching, is evident from many places in the New Testament, as well as by the names by which they are designated; but there is also evidence that there was, in some churches at least, a distinct class of men to whom the government of the church was especially confided. In cases where a church was established where there had been a synagogue, it seems most probable that the apostles would make use of the existing organization in its government, and engraft the Christian church on that religious community which they found already in existence. On this point, the following remarks of Archbishop Whately seem so well founded, that they must commend themselves to every one as founded in truth:—

"It appears highly probable—I might say morally certain—that wherever a Jewish synagogue existed that was brought—the whole or the chief part of it—to embrace the gospel, the apostles did not there so much *form* a Christian church (or congregation; ecclesia) as *make an existing congregation Christian;* by introducing the Christian sacraments and worship, and establishing whatever regulations were requisite for the newly-adopted faith; leaving the machinery (if I may so speak) of government unchanged; the 'rulers of synagogues,' elders,

and other officers (whether spiritual or ecclesiastical, or both) being already provided in the existing institutions. And it is likely that several of the earliest Christian churches did originate in this way; that is, that they were *converted synagogues*, which *became* Christian churches as soon as the members, or the main part of the members, acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah.

"The attempt to effect this conversion of a Jewish synagogue into a Christian church seems always to have been made, in the first instance, in every place where there was an opening for it. Even after the call of the idolatrous Gentiles, it appears plainly to have been the practice of the apostles Paul and Barnabas, when they came to any city in which there was a synagogue, to go thither first and deliver their sacred message to the Jews and 'devout (or proselyte) Gentiles,' according to their own expression, (Acts xiii. 16,) to the 'men of Israel and those *that feared* God;' adding, that 'it was necessary that the word of God should first be preached to them.'

"And when they found a church in any of those cities in which (and such were, probably, a very large majority) there was no Jewish synagogue that received the gospel, it is likely that they would still conform, in a great measure, to the same model."*

* Kingdom of Christ Delineated, Essay II. § 9.

But there is also express mention in the New Testament of permanent officers appointed to *rule* the church, as distinct from the teachers and pastors. 1 Cor. xii. 28: "And God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles;" that is, those who had the power of working miracles; "then gifts of healing," or those who had the power of healing the sick; "*helps, governments*, diversities of tongues." The idea here is, undoubtedly, that there were those who were appointed in the church to the business of *ruling*—as there were for prophesying, or for teaching, or for healing the sick. Whether it refers to a distinct class of men who were set apart to this work, and who were to be a permanent "order" in the church, cannot, from this passage, be determined with certainty, and is not now material. All that is necessary to be observed is, that there were those who were distinct from the "apostles," and the "prophets," and the "teachers," whose office it was to administer the government of the church. The same thing is apparent from 1 Tim. v. 17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." The plain meaning of this passage is, that while there were "elders" who laboured in "the word and doctrine," that is, in preaching, there were also those who did *not* labour in "word and doctrine," but who yet were appointed to "rule" in the church.

(3.) There were in the church, as it was organized by the apostles, those who administered the office of deacons; and this office is so mentioned as to make it evident that it was designed to be permanent. Acts vi. 1–6. The *office*, as there designated, was to take the charge of the poor, and to administer to them the alms of the church. This office is subsequently referred to in such a way as to show that it was not designed to be a temporary appointment. Thus, the church of Philippi was organized with such a class of officers, and that class remained at the time when the apostle addressed them from Rome: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the bishops and *deacons*." Phil. i. 1. So in 1 Tim. iii. 8–10, the qualifications of "deacons" are so mentioned as to show that this was to be a permanent office in the church: "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also be first proved, then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless." "Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that use the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." Verses 12, 13.

It is to be remembered that, in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, the apostle was addressing those

who were ministers of the gospel, and who were especially and expressly intrusted with the organizing of churches, and the appointment of officers over them, (1 Tim. i. 3, 4; Titus i. 5;) and it will contribute to illustrate what has been said about the *permanent* offices of the church, to remark that in these epistles there are no instructions given about appointing any to be the "successors of the apostles" or to the apostolic office; none in regard to the appointment of those who should succeed the "seventy disciples;" none in reference to the institution of "prophets;" and none in reference to the appointment of "deaconesses;" unless 1 Tim. v. 3, 9–11, and Titus ii. 3, 4, should be regarded as such. This circumstance is an additional consideration to show that those were not designed to be permanent offices in the church, but that they were temporary in their nature. It is scarcely conceivable that in formal letters to two ministers of religion, occupied mainly with instructions respecting the officers and the government of the church, there should have been such an omission if those offices had been designed to be of a permanent character.

(4.) There is evidence in the New Testament that it was intended that there should be a permanent relation between a minister of the gospel and a particular church; or that the *pastoral relation* should exist. The evidence of this is found in the following considerations:—

(*a*) The *name* pastor, already adverted to, which

naturally implies the existence of the correlative *pastoral charge*—as the name "shepherd" naturally implies that there is a *flock*.

(*b*) The duty enjoined on the churches to provide for the wants of the ministers of religion, also, naturally implies the existence of this relation. It could scarcely be inculcated as a duty to support the ministry in general, or those to whom they sustained no special relation; and the duty is, in fact, enjoined on them to support those who laboured especially for their benefit. Gal. vi. 6: "Let him that is taught in the word communicate [impart] unto him that teacheth in all good things." 1 Cor. ix. 7: "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?" Ver. 11: "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" Ver. 14: "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

(*c*) Such permanent officers or pastors were appointed in the church at Ephesus. In the discourse of the apostle Paul to the "elders" of the church there, when assembled at Miletus, he addresses them as appointed to watch and guard and govern the church, evidently with the understanding that they had been appointed to their office as a permanent relation between them and the church there. "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock,

over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Acts xx. 28, 29.

(*d*) The church at Philippi was likewise organized with those who are addressed as sustaining a permanent relation to the church. "Paul and Timotheus—to the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, *with the* BISHOPS (σὺν ἐπισκόποις—comp. the account of the "elders" of Ephesus, Acts xx. 28, "over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *bishops*"—ἐπισκόπους,) and deacons." Phii. i. 1. The office of "bishop," or pastor, therefore, in the churches at Philippi and Ephesus, was a permanent office.

(*e*) The same thing evidently existed in the churches in Crete. Thus Paul says to Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." Tit. i. 5. This relation, therefore, was to be constituted in every city where there was a church, and as this instruction was given to one who was himself a minister of religion, and who was set apart for the purpose of aiding in the organization of Christian churches, it follows that this was designed to be a permanent relation.

It is clear, therefore, that it was contemplated that there should be permanent officers in the church, and it is not difficult to determine what they were;

nor to ascertain from the New Testament what officers were appointed only for a temporary purpose.

SECT. 2.—*The actual organization and government of the church, as described in the New Testament.*

If the above views are correct, then but one inquiry now remains. It is, in what way was the government and discipline of the church actually administered? Who appointed and ordained to the office of the ministry? Who administered discipline? Was this done solely by the "prelate"? Was ordination performed by him alone? Had he alone the right to admit members to the church, and to exclude them from it?—The positions which have been already taken on this subject will be strengthened by a brief view of the actual statements in the New Testament. I observe, then,

1. *That presbyters had the right of ordaining.*

If this can be made out, then it will be an additional consideration to show that the main point claimed for the superiority of bishops is unfounded. I proceed now, therefore, to show that there is positive proof that presbyters *did* ordain. I have shown, in the course of the argument, that they exercised the office of discipline—one of the things claimed peculiarly for bishops; and I now proceed to prove, that the office of *ordaining* was one which was intrusted to them, and which they exercised. If this point is demonstrated, then it will follow still

further, that the peculiarity of the office of the apostles was not that they ordained, and that the clergy of the New Testament are not divided into "three orders," but are equal in ministerial rank and power. The argument is indeed complete without this; for, unless Episcopalians can show, by positive proof, the claims of their prelates to the right of ordination and discipline, the parity of the clergy follows as a matter of course.

I am a Presbyterian. But my argument does not require that I should go largely into a defence of the form of church government which I regard as most in accordance with the principles of the New Testament. The leading object of this "Inquiry" is to *disprove* Episcopacy; and the conclusion which will be reached on this point is one in which all who are not Episcopalians will coincide. All Protestant denominations, with the single exception of the comparatively small sect of Episcopalians, are agreed in maintaining the doctrine of the parity of the clergy, and the maintenance of this is the essential feature in which they differ from the advocates of Prleacy. If the claims of Episcopacy in regard to the "*three grades*" are disproved, it follows that the clergy are on an equality. If it is shown that the doctrine of the New Testament is that presbyters are to ordain, it is a sufficient disposal of the "feeble claims of lay-ordination," and of all other claims. It will follow, that a valid ordination is that which is performed in accordance

with the direction that *presbyters* should ordain. It will follow also, as has been remarked, that Episcopal ordination is valid, not because it is performed by a prelate, but because it is in fact a mere Presbyterian performance. See pp. 123–126.

In proof of the point now before us, therefore, I adduce 1 Tim. iv. 14: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, *with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*" This passage, which, to the common sense of mankind, affirms the very thing under discussion, it is evidently material for Episcopalians to dispose of, or their claim to exclusive rights and privileges are forever destroyed. I shall, therefore, examine the passage, and then notice the objections to its obvious and common-sense interpretation, alleged by Episcopalians.

I observe then, (1.) That the translation is fairly made. Much learned criticism has been exhausted, to very little purpose, by Episcopalians, to show that a difference exists between "with" (μετὰ) in this place, and "by" (διὰ) in 2 Tim. i. 6. It has been said, "that such a distinction may justly be regarded as intimating, that the *virtue* of the ordaining act flowed from Paul, while the presbytery, or the rest of that body, if he were included in it, expressed only consent." Tract, p. 22. But it has never been shown, nor can it be, that the preposition "with" does not fairly express the force of the original. The same observation may be applied to

the word "presbytery," (πρεσβυτέριον.) It denotes properly an assembly or council of elders, or presbyters—*Versammlung* od. *Rath der Aelteren. Passow.* In Luke xxii. 66, it is applied to the body of elders which composed the Sanhedrim, or Great Council of the Jews, and is translated "the elders of the people:" το πρεσβυτέριον τοῦ λαοῦ. See also, Acts xxii. 5: "the estate of the elders." The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in the passage under consideration. Dr. Onderdonk has endeavoured to show, that it means "the *office* to which Timothy was ordained, not the *persons* who ordained him; so that the passage would read, 'with the laying on of hands to confer the *presbyterate,*' or presbytership, or the clerical office;" and appeals to the authority of Grotius and Calvin, in the case. Tract, pp. 19, 20. In regard to this interpretation, I observe, (*a*) That if this be correct, then it follows, that Timothy was not *an apostle,* but *an elder,*—he was ordained to the office of the *presbyterate,* or the eldership. Timothy, then, is to be laid out of the college of apostles, and reduced to the humble office of a presbyter. When prelacy is to be established by showing that the office of apostles was transmitted, Timothy is an apostle; when it is necessary to make *another* use of this same man, it appears that he was ordained to the *presbyterate,* and he becomes an humble *presbyter,*—a "nose of wax" of great convenience to the argument of Episcopacy. But, (*b*) If the word "pres-

bytery" (πρεσβυτέριον) here means the *presbyterate*, and not the *persons*, then it doubtless means the same in the two other places where it occurs. In Luke xxii. 66, then, we receive the information that "the presbyterate," "the presbytership," or "the clerical office" of the people, that is, the body by which the people conferred "the presbyterate," came together with the scribes. In Acts xxii. 5, we are informed, that the "presbyterate," or "the clerical office," would bear witness with the high-priest to the life of Paul. Such absurdities show the propriety of adhering, in interpretation, to the obvious and usual meaning of the words. (*c*) The word is fixed in its meaning, in the usage of the church. Suicer (Thesaurus) says, it denotes "an assembly, congregation, and college of *presbyters* in the Christian church." In all the instances which he quotes from Theodoret, (on 1 Tim. iv. 14,) from Chrysostom, (Homil. xiii. on this epistle,) from Theophylact, (in loc.) and from Ignatius, (Epis. to Antioch, and to the Trallians,) there is not the slightest evidence that it is ever used to denote the *office*, instead of the *persons*, of the presbytery. (*d*) As the opinion of Grotius is referred to by Dr. Onderdonk, I will quote here a passage from his commentary on this place. "The custom was, that the presbyters who were present placed their hands on the head of the candidate, at the same time with the presiding officer of their body," *cum cœtus sui principe*. "Where the apostles, or their assistants,

were not present, ordination took place by the presiding officer (*Præsidem*) of their body, with the concurrence of the presbytery,"—*consentiente presbyterio.* It is particularly surprising that the authority of CALVIN should have been adduced as sanctioning that interpretation which refers the word *presbytery* to *office*, and not to *persons.* His words are, "They who interpret *presbytery*, here, as a collective noun, denoting the college of presbyters, are, in my judgment, right." My first argument, then, is, that the word "presbytery," denoting the persons who composed the *body*, or *college of elders*, is the proper, obvious, and established sense of the passage.

(2.) It is evident, from this passage, that whoever else might have been engaged in this transaction, a material part of it belonged to the presbytery or eldership concerned. "*Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy;* WITH THE LAYING ON OF THE HANDS OF THE PRESBYTERY." Here it is evident, that the presbytery bore a material part in the transaction. Paul says, that the gift which was in Timothy was given him by *prophecy*, with the laying on of the hands *of the presbytery.* That is, that some prophecies relating to Timothy (comp. 1 Tim. i. 18, "according to the prophecies which went before in thee") had designated him as a proper person for the ministry, or that it had been predicted that he *would* be employed in the ministry; but the prophecy did not invest him with the office—did not confer the gift. *That* was done—that formal ap-

pointment fulfilling the prophecy—by the imposition of the hands of the presbytery. It was necessary that that act of the presbytery should thus concur with the prophecy, or Timothy would have remained a layman. The presbyters laid their hands on him, and he thus received his office. As the prophecy made no part of his ordination, it follows that he was ordained by the presbytery.

(3.) The statement here is just such a one as would be given now in a Presbyterian ordination; it is *not* one which would be made in an Episcopal ordination. A Presbyterian would choose these very words to give an account of an ordination in his church; an Episcopalian would not. The former speaks of ordination by a *presbytery;* the latter, of ordination by a *bishop*. The former can use the account of the apostle Paul, here, as applicable to ordination, without explanations, comments, new versions, or criticisms; the latter cannot. The passage speaks to the common understanding of men, in favour of Presbyterian ordination—of the action of a *presbytery* in the case; it never speaks the language of Episcopacy, even after all the torture to which it may be subjected by Episcopal criticism. The passage is one, too, which is not like that which speaks of the "apostles *and* elders," "the apostles, *and* elders, *and* brethren," the *only* direct passage on which Episcopacy relies, and which has no perceptible connection with the case; but it is one which speaks on the very subject—which relates to the exact trans-

action, and which makes a positive affirmation of the very thing in debate.

(4.) The supposition that this was not a *presbyterial* transaction renders the passage unmeaning. Here was present a body of men called a presbytery. We ask Episcopalians, why they were there? The answer which they give is, *not* for the purpose of ordination, but for "concurrence." Paul, the prelate, say they, is the sole ordainer. We see Timothy kneeling before the presbytery. We see them solemnly impose their hands on him. We ask, Why is this? "*Not* for the purpose of ordination," the Episcopalian replies, "but for *concurrence*. Paul is the ordainer." But we ask, further, Had they no share in the ordination? "None at all." Had they no participation in conferring the gift designated by prophecy? "None at all." Why, then, are they present? Why do they lay their hands on him? For "concurrence"—for form, for nothing! It was empty pageantry, in which they were mistaken when supposing that their act had any thing to do in conferring the gift; for their presence really *meant* nothing, and the whole transaction could as well have been performed without as with them.

(5.) If this ordination was the joint act of the presbytery, we have here a complete Scriptural account of a Presbyterian ordination. It becomes then, a very material question, how Episcopalians dispose of this passage of Scripture. Their difficulties and embarrassments in relation to it will still

further confirm the obvious interpretation which Presbyterians suggest and hold. These difficulties and embarrassments are thus exhibited by Dr. Onderdonk:

He *first* doubts whether this transaction was an *ordination*. Tract, pp. 18, 19. To this I answer, (1.) That, if it were not, then there is no account that Timothy was ever ordained; (2.) That there is no specific work mentioned in the history of the apostles to which Timothy was designated, unless it was ordination; (3.) That it is the *obvious* and fair meaning of the passage; (4.) That, if *this* does not refer to ordination, it would be easy to apply the same denial to all the passages which speak of the "imposition of hands," and to show that there was no such thing as ordination to the ministry, in any case; (5.) That it accords with the common usage of the terms—"imposition of hands"—ἐπιθέσις τῶν χειρῶν—in the New Testament. The phrase occurs but four times:—Acts viii. 18; 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6; Heb. vi. 2. In all these places, it evidently denotes conferring some gift, office, or favour, described by the act. In 2 Tim. i. 6, it denotes, by the acknowledgment of all Episcopalians, ordination to the ministry. Why should it not here? (6.) If, as Dr. Onderdonk supposes, it refers to "an inspired designation of one already in the ministry to a particular field of duty," (Tract, p. 19,) then, (*a*) I ask, why we have no other mention of this transaction? (*b*) How is it to be accounted

for, that Paul, while here evidently referring Timothy to the duties and responsibilities of the ministerial office in general, should not refer to his ordination, but to a designation to a particular field of labour? His argument to Timothy, on such a supposition, would be this: "Your office of a minister of the gospel is one that is exceedingly important. A bishop must be blameless, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, etc. (Chap. iii.) In order to impress this more deeply on you, I refer you—not to the solemnity of your ordination-vows—but, *I solemnly remind* you of *an inspired separation of one already in the ministry to a particular field of duty.*" I need only observe here, that this is not a mode of argument which looks like Paul. But,

Secondly. Dr. Onderdonk supposes that this was not a *Presbyterian* ordination. Tract, pp. 19–21. His first supposition is, that the word "presbytery" does not mean the persons, but the office, p. 19. This has been already noticed. He next supposes (pp. 20, 21,) that if "the presbytery" here means not the office given to Timothy, but a body of elders, it cannot be shown "of whom this ordaining presbytery was composed," p. 21. And he then proceeds to state, that there are "seven modes" in which this "presbytery" might be composed. It might be made up of "ruling elders;" or, it might be composed of the "grade called presbyters;" or, as Peter and John called themselves

"elders," might be made up of "apostles;" or, "there may have been ruling elders *and* presbyters; or, presbyters *and* one or more apostles; or, ruling elders and one or more of the apostles; or, ruling elders, *and* presbyters, and apostles," p. 21. Now, as Dr. Onderdonk has not informed us *which* of these modes he prefers, we are left merely to conjecture. We may remark on these suppositions, (1.) That they are *mere* suppositions. There is not the shadow of proof to support them. The word "presbytery"—πρεσβυτέριον—does not appear to be such a difficult word of interpretation, as to make it necessary to envelop it in so much mist in order to understand it. The argument here is such as a man always employs when he is pressed by difficulties which he cannot meet, and when he throws himself into a labyrinth, in the hope, that amidst its numerous passages, he may escape detection, and evade pursuit. (2.) If this "body of elders" was made up of "ruling elders," or, "of the grade called presbyters," then the argument of Episcopacy is overthrown. Here is an instance, on *either* supposition, of Presbyterian ordination, which is fatal to the claims that bishops *only* ordain. Or, if it be supposed that this was not an ordination, but "an inspired separation of one already in the ministry to a particular field of duty," it is an act equally fatal to the claim of prelates to the general "superintendence" of the church; since it is manifest that these "elders" took upon themselves the functions of this

office, and designated "the bishop of Ephesus" to his field of labour. Such a transaction would scarcely meet with Episcopal approbation in the nineteenth century.

But in regard to the other supposition, that a part or all the "presbytery" was composed of apostles, I remark, (1.) That it is a *gratuitous* supposition. There is not an instance in which the term "presbytery," or "body of elders," is applied in the New Testament to the collective body of the apostles. (2.) On the supposition that the "presbytery" was composed entirely of apostles, then how does it happen that, in 2 Tim. i. 6, Paul appropriates to himself a power which belonged to every one of them in as full right as to him? How came they to surrender that power into the hands of an individual? Was it the *character* of Paul thus to assume authority which did not belong to him? We have seen, already, how, on the supposition of the Episcopalian, he superseded "Bishop" Timothy in the exercise of discipline, in Corinth, and in his own "diocese" at Ephesus; we have now an instance in which he claims all the virtue of the ordaining act where his fellow-apostles must have been equally concerned.

But if a *part* only of this "presbytery" was composed of apostles, and the remainder presbyters either ruling elders, or "the second grade," I would make the following inquiries:—Was Timothy ordained as a prelate? So the Episcopalians with one

voice declare—prelate of Ephesus. Then it follows, that Timothy, a prelate, was set apart to his work by the imposition of the hands of elders. What was then his prelatical character? Does the water in the cistern rise higher than the fountain? If laymen were concerned, Timothy was a layman still; if presbyters, Timothy was a presbyter still. And thus all the power of prelates, from him of Rome downward, has come through the hands of humble presbyters—just as all non-Episcopalians believe, and just as history affirms. Or was he ordained as a *presbyter?* Then his Episcopal character, so far as it depends on his ordination, is swept away; and thus we have not a solitary instance of the consecration of a prelate in all the New Testament.

Which of these suppositions Episcopalians would be disposed to receive as the true one, is not known. All of them cannot be true; and whichever is preferred is equally fatal to the argument, and involves a refutation of the claims of prelacy.

The only other reply with which Episcopalians meet the argument for Presbyterian ordination from this passage, is the supposition that the *virtue* of the ordaining act was derived from the apostle Paul. The passage on which they rest the argument for this is 2 Tim i. 6, "That thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of MY hands." On this passage I observe, (1.) Paul does not deny that *other* hands were also imposed on

Timothy, nor that his authority was derived *also* from others in conjunction with himself. (2.) That by the supposition of Episcopalians, as well as Presbyterians, other hands were, in fact, imposed on him. (3.) It was perfectly natural for Paul, in consequence of the relation which Timothy sustained to him as his adopted son, (1 Tim. i. 2;) as being selected by him for the ministry, (Acts xvi. 3;) and, as being his companion in his travels, to remind him, near the close of his own life, (2 Tim. iv. 6,) that he had been solemnly set apart to the work by himself—to bring his *own* agency into full view—in order to stimulate and encourage him. That Paul had a part in the act of the ordination is admitted; that others also had a part—the "presbytery"—has been proved. (4.) The expression which is here used is just such as the aged Presbyterian minister would now use, if directing a farewell letter to a son in the ministry. He would remind him, as Paul does in this epistle, (2 Tim. iv. 6,) that he was about to leave the ministry and the world; and if he wished to impress his mind in a peculiarly tender manner, he would remind him also, that *he* took part in his ordination; that under his own hands he had been designated to the work of the ministry; and he would endeavour to deepen his conviction of the importance and magnitude of the work, by the reflection that he had been solemnly set apart to it by a *father*. Yet who would infer from this, that the aged Presbyterian would wish to be regarded as a *prelate?*

I have now considered all the objections that have been made to the obvious interpretation of this passage, and it may now be submitted to any candid mind as a full and unqualified statement of an instance of Presbyterian ordination. Whichever of the half-dozen suppositions—assuming a hue, chameleon-like, from the nature of the argument to be refuted—that Episcopalians are compelled to apply to the passage is adopted, we have seen that they involve them in all the difficulties of an unnatural interpretation, and conduct us, by a more circuitous route, only to the plain and common-sense exposition of the passage, as decisive in favour of Presbyterian ordination.

It has thus been shown that there was one Presbyterian ordination, in the case of Timothy, and this should be allowed to settle the question. As there is no other undisputed case of ordination referred to in the New Testament, and as we may presume that on an occasion of the kind here referred to, every thing essential to a valid ordination would be observed, it demonstrates that *presbyters had and have the right to ordain.*

2. *The churches were intrusted with the right of administering discipline.*

It has been shown at length, in the examination of the claims of the "bishop" to administer discipline, and to exercise supervision, (ch. iii. § 3,) that this claim is not sustained by the authority of the New Testament. In further confirmation of these

views, and to show the nature of the organization of the Christian church, I shall now show that the churches were intrusted with this right, and were required to exercise it themselves. In support of this, I adduce the following passages of Scripture:—

Acts xx. 17, 18, 28: "From Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus, and called for the PRESBYTERS (τους πρεσβυτέρους) of the church; and when they were come to him, he said unto them, Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you BISHOPS, (ἐπισκόπους,) to feed (ποιμαίνειν) the church of God." It would be easy to show, that the word translated *feed* includes the whole duty which a shepherd exercises over his flock, including all that is needful in the supervision, government, and defence of those under his care. Proof of this may be found in the following passages of the New Testament, where the word occurs in the sense of ruling or governing, including, of course, the exercise of discipline; for how can there be government, unless there is authority for punishing offenders? Matt. ii. 6; John xxi. 16; 1 Pet. v. 2; Rev. ii. 27. ("And he shall *rule* them (ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς) with a rod of iron;" an expression which will be allowed to imply the exercise of discipline; Rev. xii. 5; xix. 15; comp. Ps. ii. 9; xxiii. 1; xxvii. 12; xlvii. 13.) The Iliad of Homer may be consulted, *passim*, for this use of the word; see particularly I. 263; II. 85.

1 Pet. v. 2, 3: "The PRESBYTERS (πρεσβυτέρους)

who are among you I exhort, who am also a PRESBYTER. FEED (ποιμάνατε) the flock of God which is among you, taking the OVERSIGHT (ἐπισκοποῦντες, discharging the duty of BISHOPS) thereof, not by constraint, but willingly." Here the very work which is claimed for prelates is enjoined on presbyters, and the very name which Episcopal bishops assume is given to presbyters, and *Peter ranks himself as on a level with them in the office of exercising discipline, or in the government of the church.* It is perfectly obvious, that the presbyters at Ephesus, and the presbyters whom Peter addressed, were intrusted with the pastoral care to the fullest extent, for they were required to engage in all the work requisite in instructing, directing, and governing the flock. And it is *as* obvious that they were intrusted with a power and an authority in this business with which presbyters are *not* intrusted by the canons of the Episcopal Church. It is respectfully asked, whether the bishop of Pennsylvania or New Jersey would now take 1 Pet. v. 2, 3, for a text, and address the "priests," or "second order of clergy," in these words, without considerable qualification:—"The PRESBYTERS who are among you I exhort, who am also a PRESBYTER. *Feed* (ποιμάνατε) the flock of God, discharging the duty of BISHOPS over it, (ἐπισκοποῦντες,) not by constraint, neither as being LORDS *over God's heritage.*"

Heb. xiii. 7: "Remember them which have the rule over you: τῶν ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν, YOUR RULERS."

Verse 17: "Obey them that have the rule over you." *Πείθεσθε τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν.* That bishops are here referred to, no one will pretend. Yet the office of *ruling* certainly implies that kind of government which is concerned in the administration of discipline.

1 Thess. v. 12: "We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, *and are over you in the Lord.*" *καὶ προϊσταμένους ὑμῶν ἐν κυρίῳ.* 1 Tim. v. 17: "Let the PRESBYTERS that rule well (*προεστῶτες*) be counted worthy of double honour." There can be no question that *these* passages are applied to presbyters. We come, then, to the conclusion, that the terms which *properly* denote government and discipline, and on which alone *any* claim for the exercise of authority can be founded—the terms expressive of governing, of feeding, of ruling, of taking the oversight—are all applied to presbyters; that the churches are required to submit to them in the exercise of that office; and that the very term denoting *Episcopal jurisdiction* is applied to them also. We ask for a solitary passage which directs apostles or prelates to administer discipline; and the case of *discipline*, therefore, may be left to the common sense of those who read the New Testament, and who believe that presbyters had any duties to perform.

But further: The *churches* were authorized to administer discipline in connection with the presiding officers; and such an account is given of this matter as to lead to the inevitable conclusion that the churches were *always* consulted, and that discipline

was *never* administered by an independent foreign minister, such as an Episcopal bishop is. The case of the church of Corinth, the one on which Episcopalians most rely, has already been considered, and it has been proved that even *there* the apostle Paul did not assume the authority of excluding a member without the concurrence and action of the church. Of a similar character is the following direction given to the church at Thessalonica: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." 2 Thess. iii. 14. In this case *the church* was directed to administer discipline itself, if there was a member in it who was disobedient to the inspired command of the apostle. The direction is not, to observe him, and to report him to the apostle or "bishop," but to proceed themselves to the act of discipline, and so to exclude him as to have no company with him. And of the same nature is the direction of the Saviour himself, in the solemn command which lays the foundation for the only authority for administering discipline at all in the churches: "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee

as a heathen man and a publican." Matt. xviii. 15–17. In regard to this passage, it may be observed, (1.) That it is to be presumed that the Saviour *designed* to embody the principles of discipline here so that they might be applied in all ages of the world, and so that this, in all circumstances, would be an adequate direction. There is not anywhere in the New Testament a more formal direction given on the subject of discipline, and it can hardly be presumed that, on such an occasion, the Saviour would have omitted what he designed should be an *essential* and a *permanent* principle. (2.) The apostles had been chosen and ordained before that direction was given, (Matt. x.,) and if he had designed that they alone should have the power of administering discipline, it is unaccountable that there is no intimation whatever that so important a function was conferred on them. The direction, "Tell it to *the church*," (*εἰπὲ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*,) is not one which would be understood as referring to the apostles, as being, in fact, "*the* church." It is a direction which would naturally be understood as referring to the assembly of the faithful. (3.) Equally unaccountable is it that no reference is made to the "*successors*" of the apostles, as having the power to administer discipline, and that this should be left to be a *standing* subject of mistake in all ages of the world. Even now, to the apprehension of the great body of plain Christians, this direction cannot possibly be made to mean that when an offence is committed, the brother

who is injured must tell it to "the bishop" as the "successor of the apostles," and that if the offender will not hear *him*, he is to be regarded as a "heathen man and a publican." (4.) This direction of the Saviour is *not* complied with in Episcopal churches, nor under their arrangement is it possible that it should be. The "bishop," intrusted with the administration of discipline, is *not* "the church," nor does "the church" ever have an opportunity of deciding on the case as the Saviour contemplated. The whole authority to administer discipline is claimed by the "bishop" by divine right, as one of the prerogatives of his office; and "the church" is excluded from all participation in saying, either collectively or by representatives, whether the offender shall or shall not be regarded "as a heathen man and a publican." The church has no option in the case.

The authority thus claimed by the bishop is a part of a system of usurpations on the prerogatives conferred by the Saviour on others. We have seen that he has usurped the prerogative of being regarded as the peculiar "successor" of the apostles; that he has usurped the exclusive power of ordaining—thus depriving presbyters of a right conferred on them in the New Testament; that he has usurped the right of "confirmation"—if it should exist at all in the church—thus practically declaring that the pastor is disqualified from admitting his own members to the communion, and claiming that there is some heavenly

influence imparted through his hands which can be conferred by no other minister of religion; and we now see that this system of usurpation is completed by depriving the church and the eldership wholly of the right of administering discipline over an offending member, thus claiming that the whole of this tremendous power should be lodged in his hands. The standing, the influence, the character of each one of the thousands of a "diocese" is thus lodged ultimately in the hands of one man—a man who is a stranger; who is bound to them by none of the tender ties of the pastoral relation; and who has the sole power to decide the case without appeal. Now, we may ask, where any thing like this is to be found in the New Testament? Did the Saviour contemplate that the voice of the church should never be heard in the discipline of its own members? On what basis is it that this power is claimed, thus depriving the churches of rights and prerogatives indubitably conferred on them by their Great Head? It is a part of a great system of usurpation which began when ambition began in the church; which has been fostered to give authority to the higher "orders" of the priesthood; and which finds its appropriate place only in the corruptions of the papacy.

SECT. 3.—*The primitive churches were organized without a prelate, and without "three orders of clergy."*

In support of this, I shall adduce the case of one church at least that was not organized on the prin-

ciples of Episcopalians, with three orders of clergy. I refer to the church at Philippi: "Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons,"—*οὐν ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις*. In regard to this church, I make the following observations:—(1.) It was organized by the apostle Paul himself, in connection with Silas, and was, therefore, on the "truly primitive and apostolic" plan. Acts xvi. (2.) It was in the centre of a large territory, the capital of Macedonia, and not likely to be placed in subjection to a diocesan of another region. (3.) It was surrounded by other churches; as we have express mention of the church at Thessalonica, and the preaching of the gospel at Berea. Acts xvii. (4.) There is mention made of but two orders of men. What the *deacons* were, we know from the appointment in Acts v. 1–6. They were designated, not to preach, but to take care of the poor members of the church, and to distribute the alms of the saints. As we have there, in the original appointment of the office, the express and extended mention of its functions, we are to infer that the design was the same at Philippi. The other class, therefore—the "bishops"—constitute the preaching order, or the clergy—those to whom were committed the preaching of the word, the administration of the sacraments, and the discipline of the church. Now, either these bishops were prelates, or they were the pastors, the presbyters of the church If Episco

palians choose to say, that they were *prelates*, then it follows, (*a*) that there was a plurality of such prelates in the same diocese, the same city, and the same church; which is contrary to the fundamental idea of Episcopacy. It follows, also, (*b*) that there was entirely wanting, in this church, the "second order" of clergy; that an Episcopal church was organized, defective in one of the essential grades, with an appointment of a body of prelates without presbyters; that is, an order of "superior" men, designated to exercise jurisdiction over "priests" who had no existence. If it be said that the "presbyters," or "second order," might have been there though Paul did not expressly name them, then we are presented with the remarkable fact, that he specifies the *deacons*, an inferior order, and expresses to them his Christian salutations; that he salutes also the "saints"—or the private members of the church—and yet entirely disregards those who had the special pastoral charge of the church. Paul thus becomes a model of incivility. In the epistles to Timothy, he gives him directions about every thing else, but no counsel about his brother "prelates;" in the epistles to the churches, he salutes their prelates and their *deacons*, but becomes utterly regardless of the "second order of clergy," the immediate pastors of the churches.

But if our Episcopal brethren prefer to say that the "bishops" here mean not prelates, but presbyters, we, so far, shall agree with them; and then it

follows, (*a*) That here is an undeniable instance of a church, or rather of a *group* of churches, large enough to satisfy the reasonable desire of any diocesan bishop for extended jurisdiction, organized without prelate or bishop. None is mentioned; and there are but two orders of men, to whom the care of the "saints at Philippi" is intrusted. (*b*) If there was a prelate there, then we ask, why Paul did not refer to him with affectionate salutations? Why does he refer to "the second and third orders of clergy," without the slightest reference to the man who was "superior to them in ministerial rank and power"? Was Paul jealous of the prelate? Or have we here *another* instance of indecorum and incivility? (*c*) If they had had a prelate, and the see was then vacant, why is there no reference to this fact? Why no condolence at their loss? Why no prayer that God would send them a man to enter into the vacant diocese? (*d*) Episcopalians have sometimes felt the pressure of these difficulties to be so great, that they have supposed the bishop was absent when this epistle was addressed to the church at Philippi, and that this was the reason why he was not remembered in the salutation. Of this solution, I observe only, that it is mere assumption. But, even granting this assumption, it is an inquiry of not very easy solution, why Paul did not make some reference to this fact, and ask their prayers for the absent prelate. One can scarcely help being forcibly remind-

ed, by the ineffectual efforts of Episcopalians to find a prelate at Philippi, of a remarkable transaction mentioned in 1 Kings xviii. 27, 28: "Either he is talking; or he is pursuing; or *he is in a journey;* or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." It is scarcely necessary to remark, that if a single church is proved to have been organized without the "*three* orders of clergy," the parity of the ministry is made out by apostolic appointment, and the Episcopal argument is at an end.

I may add, that this view of the organization of the church in Philippi is confirmed by an examination of the organization of the church in its immediate neighbourhood, in Thessalonica. In the two epistles which Paul directed to that church, there is not the slightest reference to any prelatical bishop; there is no mention of "three orders of clergy;" there is no hint that the church was organized on that plan. But one order of ministers is mentioned, evidently as entitled to the same degree of respect, and as on an entire equality. They were clearly of the same rank, and engaged in discharging the functions of the same office. "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake." 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. Will the advocates of Episcopacy be kind enough to inform us why there is no mention of the prelate, whether present or absent?

We are here prepared to estimate the force of the undeniable fact, that there is no distinction of grade or rank in the *names* which are given to the ministers of the gospel in the New Testament. It is admitted by Episcopalians themselves, that the names bishop, presbyter, etc., in the Bible, do not denote those ranks of church-officers to which they are now applied, but are given indiscriminately to all. On this point, we have the authority of Dr. Onderdonk. "The *name* 'bishop,'" says he, "which now designates the highest grade of the ministry, *is not appropriated to this office in Scripture.* That name is given to the middle order, or presbyters; and ALL THAT WE READ IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CONCERNING 'BISHOPS,' (including, of course, the words 'overseers' and 'oversight,' which have the same derivation,) IS TO BE REGARDED AS PERTAINING TO THIS MIDDLE GRADE." Tract, p. 12. "Another irregularity of the same kind occurs in regard to the word 'elder.' It is sometimes used for a minister, or clergyman of any grade, higher, middle, or lower; but it more strictly signifies a presbyter." Tract, p. 14.

In accordance with this fact, which is as remarkable as it is true, we have seen that Peter applies to himself the name presbyter, and put himself on a level with other presbyters. "The presbyters which are among you, I *exhort,*" (not I *command,* or *enjoin,* as a prelate would do,) "who am also *a presbyter.*" 1 Pet. v. 1. And in the very

next verse he exhorts them (the elders, or presbyters) to "feed the flock of God, taking the oversight," (ἐπισκοποῦντες, exercising the office of bishop,) "not by constraint."

Now let these conceded facts be borne in mind. The term presbyter is applied by the apostle Peter to himself, and "all that we read of in the New Testament concerning 'bishops,' is applied to the middle grade." The apostles address each other, and their brethren, by no words or names that indicate superior rank, grade, or authority. This fact can be accounted for only on the supposition that they regarded themselves, as ministers, as *on a level.* If they meant to teach that one class was superior in rank and power to others, they would not have used terms *always* confounding such distinctions, and *always* proceeding on the supposition that they were on an equality. It will not be pretended that they *could* not employ terms which would have marked the various grades. For if the term "bishop" can now do it, it could have done it then; if the term presbyter can now be used to denote "the middle grade," it could then have been so used. It is clear, also, that if such *had* been their intention, they would have thus employed those terms. That the sacred writers were *capable* of using language definitely, Episcopalians will not doubt. Why, then, if they *were* capable, did they choose *not* to do it? Are prelates now ever as vague and indefinite in

their use of the terms "bishop" and "presbyters," as were the apostles?

It is remarkable, also, that the mode of using these terms in the New Testament is precisely in accordance with the usage in Presbyterian and Congregational churches. *They* speak indiscriminately of their ministers, just as the sacred writers did, as "bishops," as "pastors," as "presbyters" or "elders," as "teachers," as "evangelists." *They* regard their ministers as on an equality. Did not the sacred writers do the same?

It is as remarkable, that the mode of using these terms in the Episcopal churches is NOT that which occurs in the Bible. And it is as certain, that, *were* they thus to use those terms, it would at once confound their orders and ranks, and reduce their ministers to equality. Do we ever see any approximation in their addresses, and in their canons, in this respect, to the language and style of the New Testament? Do we ever hear those of the "second order" —or *priests*—mentioned as *bishops?* Do we ever hear the term *presbyter* or *elder* applied to their *bishops?* Would it not confound all the arrangements in the Episcopal Church, if the terms *were* thus indiscriminately applied? And yet, it is to be presumed that the terms used in the New Testament to designate any office may be used still. It cannot be improper to call things by their true names, and to apply to all ranks and orders of men the terms which are applied to them by the Spirit of inspira-

tion. And as the indiscriminate use of these terms is carefully avoided by the customs and canons of the Episcopal Church; as there seems to have been a presentiment in the formation of those canons that such indiscriminate use would reduce the fabric to simple "parity" of the clergy; and as these terms *cannot* be so used without reducing these "ranks and orders" to a scriptural equality, we come to the conclusion, that the apostles *meant* to teach that the ministers of the New Testament are equal in ministerial rights and powers.

SECT. 4.—*Conclusion.*

I have now gone through this entire subject. I have examined, I trust, in a candid manner—I am sure with the kindest feelings toward my Episcopal brethren—every argument which they have to adduce from the Bible in favour of the claims of their bishops. Those arguments have been disposed of, step by step. These are ALL the arguments which Episcopacy has to urge from the Bible. There is nothing that remains. The subject is exhausted. Episcopacy rests here; and it is incumbent on Episcopacy to *show*, not to *affirm*, that our interpretation of those passages is not sustained by sound principles of exegesis.

The burden of proof still lies on them. They assumed it, and on them it rests. They affirm that enormous powers are lodged in the hands of the prelate—every thing pertaining to ordination, to confir-

mation, to discipline, to the superintendence of the Christian church. They claim powers for the "bishop" which would degrade every presbyter in the world; which would reduce him to the condition of a subordinate officer, and which would strip him of the right of transmitting his own office, and of administering discipline among his own flock. They arrogate powers which go to deprive all other presbyters, except Episcopal presbyters, of any right to officiate in the church of God; rendering their ordination invalid, their administrations void, and their exercise of the functions of their office a daring and impious invasion of the rights of the priesthood, and a violation of the law of Christ. The foundation for these sweeping, and certainly not very modest, claims, I have examined with all freedom. The argument for prelacy may be summed up in a word. It consists in the text—the solitary text—"the apostles *and* elders," "the apostles, *and* elders, *and* brethren," joined to a circuitous train of reasoning, remote from common apprehension, and too abstruse for the guidance of the mass of men. Step by step, I have followed the defenders of this system in their circuits; argument after argument I have endeavoured patiently to displace; and at the conclusion, I may ask any person of plain common sense to place his finger on that portion of the book of God which is favourable to prelacy.

This argument for the authority of prelates having been met and disproved, I have produced an

instance of express Presbyterian ordination, in the case of Timothy. Two churches we have found which were organized without prelates. We are thus, by another train of argument, conducted to the same result—that prelates are unknown in the New Testament. And, to make the argument perfectly conclusive, it has been shown that the *same titles* are applied indiscriminately to all.

This argument may be summed up in still fewer words. The Episcopal claims are *not* made out; and, of course, the clergy of the New Testament are equal. The Episcopalian has failed to show that there were *different* grades; and it follows that there must be *parity*.

In conducting this argument, I have endeavoured to show that the claims of Episcopalians are unfounded, and at the same time that there were arrangements in regard to the constitution, government, and officers of the church, which were designed to be permanent. The *general principles* of church organization were laid down as binding. The *details* were not prescribed; they were left, like the subject of civil government, to be modified by circumstances from age to age. The gospel was to be preached in all lands and in all times; the church was to be located under different forms of civil government, and among people of different habits and customs; the organization of the Christian community was to be such as would be consistent and proper under a civil government of the monarchical,

the aristocratic, or the republican form. Those regulations in detail which would be fitted to the customs of the Oriental world, might be little adapted to habits which might exist toward the setting sun; and rites, and customs, and modes of worship and of discipline which would have been appropriate to the times when the apostles lived, might be ill-adapted to some future age of the world. The same great principles of truth and worship might receive new influence and power under some modified form in a future age; and the external arrangements of the church might be left, as the subject of human government is, somewhat to the developments of time and experience. Truth is always the same. The *doctrines* of religion were not, indeed, susceptible of being modified—for *truth* is always the same. But the details of worship, and order, and discipline in the church did not require or admit of the same explicitness which were requisite in regard to the doctrines of the Trinity and the atonement.

The following remarks of Archbishop Whately on this subject seem to me to be so weighty and important, as to demand the profound attention of all who would understand the constitution of the Christian church:—

"Among the important facts which we can collect and fully ascertain from the sacred historians, scanty and irregular and imperfect as are their records of particulars, one of the most important is

that very scantiness and incompleteness in the detail—that absence of any full and systematic description of the formation and regulation of Christian communities that has been just noticed. For we may plainly infer, from this very circumstance, the design of the Holy Spirit, that those details, concerning which no precise directions, accompanied with strict injunctions, are to be found in Scripture, were meant to be left to the regulation of each church, in each age and country. On any point in which it was designed that all Christians should be, everywhere and at all times, bound as strictly as the Jews were to the Levitical law, we may fairly conclude they would have received directions no less precise, and descriptions no less minute, than had been afforded to the Jews.

"It has often occurred to my mind that the generality of even studious readers are apt, for want of sufficient reflection, to fail of drawing such important inferences as they often might, from the *omissions* occurring in any work they are perusing; from its *not* containing such and such things relative to the subject treated of. There are many cases in which the non-insertion of some particulars which, under other circumstances, we might have calculated on meeting with in a certain book, will be hardly less instructive than the things we do meet with.

"And this is much more especially the case

when we are studying works which we believe to have been composed under divine guidance. For, in the case of mere human compositions, one may conceive an author to have left out some important circumstances, either through error of judgment or inadvertency, or from having written merely for the use of a particular class of readers in his own time and country, without any thought of what might be necessary information for persons at a distance and in after-ages; but we cannot, of course, attribute to any such causes omissions in the *inspired* writers. On no supposition whatever can we account for the omission, by all of them, of many points which they do omit, and of their scanty and slight mention of others, except by considering them as withheld by the express design and will (whether *communicated* to each of them or not) of their heavenly Master, restraining them from committing to writing many things which naturally, some or other of them at least, would not have failed so to record.

"No such thing is to be found in our Scriptures as a catechism, or regular *Elementary Introduction* to the Christian religion; nor do they furnish us with any thing of the nature of a systematic creed, set of articles, Confession of Faith, or by whatever other name one may designate a regular, complete compendium of Christian doctrines; nor, again, do they supply us with a liturgy for ordinary public worship, or with forms for administering the sacra-

ments, or for conferring holy orders; nor do they even give any precise *directions* as to these and other ecclesiastical matters—any thing that at all corresponds to the rubric, or set of canons."*

I here close this inquiry into the organization and government of the apostolic church. As there is nothing in the Bible which Episcopacy *can* add, the whole subject here should be allowed to rest. The entire *scriptural* argument is exhausted; and here the inquiry ends. In conclusion, I may remark, that I speak, I believe, the language of the great body of those who are not Episcopalians—and the language expresses the convictions of my intellect and the feelings of my heart—when I say, that we have no unkind emotions toward those who believe that Episcopacy is founded on the word of God, and is the form of church government best adapted to promote the cause of the Redeemer of the world. We do not forget the former services which the Episcopal church rendered to the cause of truth and of the world's redemption: We remember the bright and ever-living lights which her clergy and her illustrious laymen have in other times enkindled in the darkness of this world's history, and which continue to pour their pure and steady lustre on the literature, the laws, and the customs of Christian

* Kingdom of Christ Delineated, Essay II. § 8.

nations; and we trust the day will never come when the bosoms of Christians in any denomination will cease to beat with emotions of lofty thanksgiving to the God of grace that he raised up such gifted and holy men, to meet the corruptions of the papacy, and to breast the wickedness of the world.

We have no unkind emotions toward any branch of the true church of God. We strive to cherish feelings of affectionate regard for them all, and to render praise to the common Father of Christians, for any efforts which are made to advance the intelligence, the purity, and the salvation of mankind. In our views of the nature of mind and of freedom, we can have no uncharitable emotions toward any denomination of true Christians. "There are diversities of organizations, but the same Spirit." We have no expectation that all men, in this world, will think alike; and we regard it as a wise arrangement that the church of God is thus organized into different sections and departments, under the banner of the common Captain of their salvation. It promotes inquiry; it prevents complacency in mere forms and ceremonies; it produces healthy and vigorous emulation; it affords opportunities for all classes of men to arrange themselves according to their preferences and their habits of thought; and it is not unfavourable to that kindness of feeling which the Christian can cherish, and should cherish, when he utters in the sanctuary the article of his

faith, "I believe in the holy catholic church, the communion of saints." The attachment of a soldier to a particular company or squadron need not diminish his respect for other divisions of the armies of his country, or extinguish his love for her liberty. His being joined to a company of infantry need not make him feel that cavalry is useless, or involve him in a controversy with the artillery.

We ask only that Episcopacy should not assume arrogant claims; that she should be willing to take her place among other denominations of Christians, entitled, like them, to all the tender and sympathetic affections of the Christian brotherhood, and willing that they should walk in the liberty wherewith Christ has made his people free. We ask, that while *we* cheerfully concede this, *she* also should concede to all those who "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," the right to be accredited as being true churches of the Lord Jesus, and as having a valid ministry and valid ordinances.* We

* This right is conceded *in form* by the author of the "Tract" so often noticed in this argument—Dr. Onderdonk. "An apparently formidable, yet extraneous difficulty," says he, "often raised, is, that Episcopal claims *unchurch* all non-Episcopal denominations. *By the present writer this consequence is not allowed.*" P. 6. But is it ever conceded in any other way, or ever acted on? Is there any recognition of the ministers of other denominations as having a right to preach the gospel? Is there any introduction of them to the pulpits of Episcopal churches? Would such an introduction by any of the "inferior clergy" be tolerated or connived at by the diocesan bishop? To ask these questions is to answer them. But another question may be asked here: it is, How can many of

shall have no contest with our Episcopal brethren for loving the church of their choice, and the church in which they seek to prepare themselves for heaven. We shall not utter the language of unkindness for their reverencing the ministerial office in which the spirits of Cranmer and Leighton were prepared for their eternal rest. Content that other denominations should enjoy like freedom, when they do not arrogate to themselves unholy claims, and attempt to "lord it over" other parts of "God's heritage," we shall pray for their success, as for that of all other Christians, and rejoice in their advancement. But the moment they cross this line—the moment they make any advances which resemble those of the papacy—the moment they set up the claim of being the only "primitive and apostolical church"—and the moment they speak of the "invalid ministry" and the "invalid ordinances" of other churches, and regard them as "left to the uncovenanted mercies of God"—that moment the language of argument and of Christian rebuke should be heard from every other denomination. There are minds which can investigate the Bible as well as the advocates for Episcopacy; there are pens which can compete

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the clergy of the Episcopal Church be satisfied with occupying such a position in regard to their ministerial brethren of other denominations, as to have the *fair interpretation* of their conduct to be that they regard them as wholly unauthorized to preach the gospel? Do they really believe this? If they do not, does not Christian candour, fairness, independence, and *justice*, require them in act and word to avow it?

with any found in the Episcopal Church; and there are men who will not be slow to rebuke the first appearance of arrogance and of lordly assumption, and who will remind them that the time has gone by when an appeal to the infallible church will answer in this controversy. Arrogant assumptions do not suit the present state of intelligence in this land, or the genius of our institutions. While the Episcopal Church shall seek, by kind and gentle means, to widen its influence, like the flowing of a river, or like the dews of heaven, we shall hail its advances: when she departs from this course, and utters the language of authority and denunciation,—when she endeavours to prostrate other churches, as with the sweepings of the mountain torrent,—she will be reminded, by a voice uttered from all the institutions of these times, that Episcopacy has had its reign of *authority* in the dark ages and at the Vatican; and that the very genius of Protestantism is, *that one church is not to utter the language of arrogance over another, and that not authority or denunciation, but* SCRIPTURAL EXPOSITION, *is to determine which is in accordance with the book of God.*

We have no war to wage with Episcopacy. We know, we deeply feel, that much may be said in favour of it, apart from the claim which has been set up for its authority from the New Testament. Its past history, in some respects, makes us weep; in others, it is the source of sincere rejoicing and

praise. We cannot forget, indeed, its assumptions of power, or hide from our eyes the days of the papacy, when it clothed in sackcloth the Christian world. We cannot forget the days in its history, when, even as a part of the Protestant religion, it brought "a numb and chill stupidity of soul, an inactive blindness of mind, upon the people, by its leaden doctrine;" we cannot forget "the frozen captivity" of the church, "in the bondage of prelates;"* nor can we remove from our remembrance the sufferings of the Puritans, and the bloody scenes in Scotland. But we do not charge this on the Episcopacy of our times. We do not believe that it is essential to its existence. With more grateful feelings we recall other events of its history. We associate it with the brightest and happiest days of religion, and liberty, and literature, and law. We remember that it was under the Episcopacy that the church in England took its firm stand against the papacy; and that this was its form when Zion rose to light and splendour from the dark night of ages. We remember the name of Cranmer—Cranmer, first, in many respects, among the reformers; that it was by his steady hand that, under God, the real church of the Saviour was conducted through the agitating and distressing times of Henry the Eighth. We remember that God gave this distinguished pre-

* Milton.

late access to the heart of one of the most capricious, cruel, inexorable, blood-thirsty, and licentious monarchs that has disgraced the world; and that for the sake of Cranmer and his church, he conducted Henry as "by a hook in the nose," and made him faithful to the Archbishop of Canterbury when faithful to none else; so that, perhaps, the only redeeming trait in the character of Henry is his fidelity to this first British prelate under the reformation.* The world will not soon forget the names of Latimer and Ridley, and Rogers and Bradford; names associated in the feelings of Christians with the long list of ancient confessors "of whom the world was not worthy," and who did honour to their nature and to mankind by sealing their attachment to the Son of God in the flames. Nor can we forget that we owe to the Episcopal Church that which fills our mind with gratitude and praise, when we look for examples of consecrated talent, elegant literature, and humble piety. While men honour elevated Christian feeling—while they revere sound learning—while they render tribute to

* It may be proper here to remark, that Cranmer by no means entertained the modern views of the scriptural authority of bishops. He maintained "that the appointment to spiritual offices belongs indifferently to bishops, to princes, or to the people, according to the pressure of existing circumstances. He affirmed the *original identity of bishops and presbyters;* and contended that nothing more than mere election or appointment is essential to the sacerdotal office, without consecration or any other solemnity." Le Bas' Life of Cranmer, vol. i. p. 197.

clear and profound reasoning—they will not forget the names of Barrow and Taylor, of Tillotson, Hooker, and Butler; and when they think of humble, pure, sweet, heavenly piety, their minds will recur instinctively to the name of Leighton. Such names do honour to the world. When we think of them, we have it not in our hearts to utter one word against a church which has thus done honour to our race and to our common Christianity.

Such we wish Episcopacy still to be. There are minds and hearts, we doubt not, which will find more edification in the forms of worship in that church than in any other. To all who hold essential truth, we bid God-speed; and for all such we lift our humble supplications to the God of all mercy, that he will make them the means of spreading the gospel around the globe. We have never doubted that many of the purest flames of devotion which rise from the earth ascend from the altars of the Episcopal Church, and that many of the purest spirits which the earth contains minister at those altars, or breathe forth their prayers and praises in language consecrated by the use of piety for centuries.

We have but one wish in regard to Episcopacy. We wish her not to assume arrogant claims. We wish her not to utter the language of denunciation. We wish her to fall in with the spirit of the age. Our desire is that she may become throughout—

what we would fain hope she is increasingly becoming—the warm, devoted friend of revivals and of missionary operations. She is consolidated; well-marshalled; under an efficient system of laws; and pre-eminently fitted for powerful action in the field of Christian warfare. We desire to see her,—with her dense, solid organization; with her unity of movement; with her power of maintaining the position which she takes; and with her eminent ability to advance the cause of sacred learning and the love of order and of law,—accompanying other churches in the conquests of redemption in an alienated world; and whatever positions may be assigned to other denominations, we will cherish the hope that the Episcopal Church is destined yet to consecrate her wealth and power to the work of making a perpetual aggression on the territories of sin and of death.

THE END.

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